Then there came another trouble. When Miss Gilby first came to our bouse there was a great flutter, which afterwards calmed down when they got used to her. Now the whole thing was stirred up afresh. I had never bothered myself before as to whether Miss Gilby was European or Indian, but I began to do so now I said to my husband; 'We must get rid of Miss Gilby '

He kept silent.

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I talked to him wildly, and he went away sad at heart

After a fit of weeping, I felt in a more reasonable mood when we met at night 'I cannot,' my husband said, 'look upon Miss Gilby through a mist of abstraction, just because she is English Cannot you get over the barrier of her name after such a long acquaintance? Cannot you realise that she loves you?" I felt a little ashamed and replied with some

sharpness: 'Let her remain I am not over anxious to send her away?

And Miss Gilby remained.

But one day I was told that she had been insulted by a young fellow on her way to church This was a boy whom we were supporting. My husband turned him out of the house. There was not a single soul, that day, who could forgive my husband for that act, -not even I This time Miss Gilby left of her own accord. She shed tears when she came to say good-bye, but my mood would not melt. To slander the poor boy so, -and such a fine boy, 24 Look here, child, count yourself fortunate that your

husband is not wasting himself as well!" My inshaud's his of character was a long one. He

e ic.

would assist to the bitter end of utter failure anyone who wanted to invent a new loom or rice-husking But what annexed the most was the way that Saudip Rabo used to ffeece him on the pretext of Suadeshi work. Whenever he wanted to start a newspaper, or travel about preaching the Cause, or take a change of air by the advice of his doctor, my husband would unquestioningly supply him with the money This was over and above the regular living allowance which Sandip Babu also received from . him. The strangest part of it was that my husband

and Sandip Babu did not agree in their opinions. As soon as the Suadeth storm reached my blood. I said to my husband. I must burn all my foreign clothes.

Why burn them? said he 'You need not

wear them as long as you please."

'As long as I please! Not in this life. . .'

Very well, do not wear them for the rest of your life, then. But why this bontire business?"

'Would you thwart me in my resolve?' What I want to say is this: Why not try to build up something? You should not waste even a tenth

part of your energies in this destructive excitement.

' Such excitement will give us the energy to build' 'That is as much as to say, that you cannot light

the house unless you set fire to it.'

n

was the champion of Bengal. As the sky had shed its light over him, so he must receive the consecration of a woman's benediction. .

It seemed to clear to me that, since he had caught sight of me, the fire in his words had flamed up more fiercely. Indra's1 steed refused to be remed in, and there came the roar of thunder and the flash of lightning I said within myself that his language had caught fire from my eyes, for we women are not only the deities of the household fire, but the flame of the soul itself

I returned home that evening radiant with a new pride and joy The storm within me had shifted my whole being from one centre to another. Like the Greek maidens of old, I fain would cut off my long, resplendent tresses to make a bow-string for my hero. Had my outward ornaments been connected with my inner feelings, then my necklet, my armlets, my bracelets, would all have burst their bonds and flung themselves over that assembly like a shower of meteors. Only some personal sacrifice. I felt, could help me to bear the tumult of my exaltation.

When my husband came home later. I was trembling lest he should utter a sound out of tune with the triumphant paean which was still ringing in my cars. lest his fanaticism for truth should lead him to express disapproval of anything that had been said that afternoon. For then I should have openly

The Immer Player of Burdu Mythology

THE HOME AND THE WORLD true. That was why I did not like it when my lusband unquestioningly gave in to all his demands. I

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could bear the waste of money, but it yexed me to think that he was impound on my footbood, taking advantage of friendship. His bearing was not that of an ascent, nor even of a person of moderate means, but foppish all over Love of comfort seemed to . any number of such reflections come back

to me to-day, but let them be When, however, Sandip Babo began to speak that afternoon, and the hearts of the crowd swaved and surged to his words, as though they would break all bounds, I saw him wonderfully transformed. Especially when his features were suddenly lit up by a shaft of light from the slowly setting sun, as it sunk below the roof-line of the pavilion, he seemed to me to be marked out by the gods as their messenger to mortal men and women. From beginning to end of his speech, each one of his utterances was a stormy outburst. There was no limit to the confidence of his assurance I do not know how it happened, but I found I had impatiently pushed away the screen from before me and had fixed my gaze upon him. Yet there was none in that crowd who paid any heed to my doings.

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When, however, Sandip Babu began to speak tha

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his utterances was a stormy ontburst. There was no limit to the confidence of his assurance. I do not know how it happened, but I found I had imnationtly pushed away the screen from before me and had fixed my gaze upon him. Yet there was none in that crowd who paid any heed to my doings. Only once, I noticed, his eyes, like stars in fateful Orion, flashed full on my face.

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on senier. I now realize how mortalen Have been all at an electric

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lion but Sandin Bab a was grong to be with es 'He noff to Rangour early to-morning permina,'

saul ens loudianet 'Must it be to-moretum'

'Yes, he is already engaged to usual there ' I was olent for a while and then asked again;

'Could be not people stay a day longer?'

"That may hardly be panieble, but why?" "I want to invite him to chaner and attend on him muself

My hisband was surprised. He had often entreated me to be present when he had particular friends to dinner, but I had never let myself be per-

smalled. He gazed at me curroudy, in silence, with a look I did not quite understand. I was suildenly overcome with a sense of shame.

' No. no.' I exclaimed, 'that would never do!' 'Why not!' said he. 'I will ask him myself, and

if it is at all possible he will surely stay on for tomorrow.

It turned out to be quite possible.

I will tell the exact truth. That day I reproached my Creator because he had not made me surpassingly beautiful,-not to steal any heart away, but because beauty is glory. In this great day the men of the country should realise its goddess in its womanhood. But, alas, the eyes of men fail to discern the goddess, if outward beauty be lacking. Would Sandip Babu find the Shakti of the Motherland manifest in me? Or would he simply take me to be an ordinary, domestic woman?

That morning I scented my flowing hair and tied it in a loose knot, bound by a cunningly intertwined red silk ribbon. Dinner, you see, was to be served at midday, and there was no time to dry my hair after my bath and do it up planted in the ordinary way. I put on a gold-bordered white sare, and my short-sleeve muslin jacket was also gold-bordered.

I felt that there was a certain restraint about my costume and that nothing could well have been simpler. But my sister-in-law, who happened to be passing by, stopped dead before me, surveyed me from head to foot and with compressed lips smiled a meaning smile When I asked her the reason, 'I am admiring your get-up!' she said.

'What is there so entertaming about it?' I enquired, considerably annoyed.

'It's superb,' she said. 'I was only thinking that one of those low-necked English bodices would have made it perfect.' Not only her mouth and eyes. but her whole body seemed to rapple with suppressed laughter as she left the room.

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I was very, very angry, and wanted to change everything and put on my everyday clothes. But I cannot tell exactly why I could not carry out my impulse Women are the ornaments of society,thus I reasoned with myself,-and my husband would never like it, if I appeared before Sandip

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Babu unworthily clad My idea had been to make my appearance after they had sat down to dinner In the bustle of looking after the serving the first awkwardness would have passed off. But dinner was not ready in time, and it was getting late. Meanwhile my husband had sent for me to introduce the guest.

I was feeling horribly shy about looking Sandip Babu in the face However, I managed to recover myself enough to say. ' I am so sorry dinner is getting late

He boldly came and sat right beside me as he replied: 'I get a dinner of some kind every day, but the Goddess of Plenty keeps behind the scenes. Now that the goddess herself has appeared, it matters little if the dunner lags behind

He was just as emphatic in his manners as he was in his public speaking. He had no hesitation and seemed to be accustomed to occupy, unchallenged. his chosen seat. He claimed the right to intimacy so confidently, that the blame would seem to belong to those who should dispute it. I was in terror lest Sandip Babu should take me

for a shrinking, old-fashic a of inanity. But, for the life of me, I could not sparkle in reparces such as might charm or dazzle him. What could have possessed me, I angrily wondered, to appear before him in such an absurd way?

I was about to retire when dinner was over, but Sandip Babu, as bold as ever, placed himself in my vay.

You must not,' he said, 'think me greedy. It was not the dinner that kept me staying on, it was your invitation. If you were to run awaynow, that would not be playing fair with your guest'

If he had not said these words with a careless case, they would have been out of tune. But, after all, he was such a great friend of my husband that I was like his sister.

While I was struggling to climb up this high wave of intimacy, my husband came to the rescue, saying: 'Why not come back to us after you have taken your dinner.'

'But you must give your word,' said Sandip Babu, 'before we let you off'

'I will come,' said I, with a slight smile

'Let me tell you,' continued Sandip Babu, 'why I cannot trust you Nikhil has been married these nine years, and all this while you have eluded me. If you do this again for another nine years, we shall never meet again.'

I took up the spirit of his remark as I dropped my voice to reply: 'Why even then should we not meet?'

' My horoscope tells me I am to die early. None of my forefathers have survived their thirtieth year. I am now twenty-seven'

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He knew this would go home. This time there must have been a shade of concern in my low voice

as I said. 'The blessings of the whole country are sure to avert the evil influence of the stars ' 'Then the blessings of the country must be voiced

by its goddess. This is the reason for my anxiety that you should return, so that my talisman may begin to work from to-day.' Sandip Babu had such a way of taking things by

storm that I got no opportunity of resenting what I never should have permitted in another 'So,' he concluded with a laugh, 'I am going to hold this husband of yours as a hostage till you

come back ' As I was coming away, he exclaimed: 'May I trouble you for a trifle?

I started and turned round.

'Don't be alarmed,' he said 'It's merely a glass of water. You might have noticed that I did not drink any water with my dinner. I take it a little later.'

Upon this I had to make a show of interest and ask him the reason. He began to give the history of his dyspensia. I was told how he had been a martyr to it for seven months, and how, after the usual course of nuisances, which included different allopathic and homocopathic misadventures, he had

obtained the most wonderful results by indigenous nethods.

nethods.
'Do you know,' he added, with a smile, 'God has built even my infirmities in such a manner that they

ouilt even my intimities in such a manner that they yield only under the bombardment of Swadesh pills.'

My husband, at this, broke his silence. 'You must confess,' said he, 'that you have as immense

must confess,' said he, 'that you have as immense an attraction for foreign medicine as the earth has for meteors. You have three shelves in your sittingroom full of . . '

Sandip Babu broke in: 'Do you know what they are? They are the punitive police They come, not because they are wanted, but because they are imposed on us by the rule of this modern age, exsecting fines and inflicting injuries.'

My husband could not bear exaggerations, and I could see he disliked this. But all ornaments are exaggerations. They are not made by God, but by man. Once I remember in defence of some untruth of mine I said to my husband. 'Only the trees and beasts and birds tell unmitigated truths, because these poor things have not the power to invent. In this men show their superiority to the lower creatures, and women beat even men. Neither is a profusion of ornament unbecoming for a woman, nor a profusion of untruth.'

As I came out into the passage leading to the zenana I found my sister-in-law, standing near a window overlooking the reception rooms, peeping through the venetian shutter.

- 'You here?' I asked in surprise.
- ' Eavesdropping!' she replied

When I returned, Sandip Babu was tenderly aplogetie. 'I am afraid we have sport your appetite

be said. I felt greatly ashamed Indeed, I had been too in

decently quick over my dinner. With a little calcula tion, it would become quite evident that my non-eat

ing had surpassed the eating. But I had no idea tha any one could have been deliberately calculating. I suppose Sandip Babu detected my feeling of shame, which only augmented it 'I was sure,' h

said, ' that you had the impulse of the wild deer to run away, but it is a great boon that you took the trouble to keep your promise with me' I could not think of any suitable reply and so

sat down, blushing and uncomfortable, at one end of the sofa The vision that I had of myself, as the Shakts of Womanhood, incarnate, crowning Sandin Raby simply with my presence, majestic and un-

ashamed, failed me altogether Sandin Babu deliberately started a discussion with my husband He knew that his keen wit flashed to the best effect in an argument. I have often since

observed, that he never lost an opportunity for a passage at arms whenever I happened to be present. He was familiar with my husband's views on the

cult of Bande Mataram, and began in a provoking

way: ' So you do not allow that there is room for an appeal to the imagination in patriotic work?"

It has its place, Sandip, I admit, but I do not believe in giving it the whole place. I would know my country in its frank reality, and for this I am both afraid and ashamed to make use of hypnotic texts of patriotism

What you call hypnotic texts I call truth truly believe my country to be my God I worship Humanity God manifests Humself both in man and in his country

' If that is what you really believe, there should be no difference for you between man and man, and so between country and country.'

'Quite true But my powers are limited, so my worship of Humanity is continued in the worship

of my country ' 'I have nothing against your worship as such,

but how is it you propose to conduct your worship of God by hating other countries in which He is equally manifest 21

' Hate is also an adjunct of worship. Arjuna won Mahadeva's favour by wrestling with him. God will be with us in the end, if we are prepared to give Him battle.'

'If that be so, then those who are serving and those who are harming the country are both His

devotees. Why, then, trouble to preach patriotism? 'In the case of one's own country, it is different

There the heart clearly demands worshin.'

- 'If you push the same argument further you ca say that since God is manifested in us, our self h
- to be worshipped before all else; because our natur instinct claims it?

 'Look here, Nikhil, this is all merely dry logi
- 'Look here, Nikhil, this is all merely dry logi Can't you recognise that there is such a thing a
- 'I tell you the truth, Sandip,' my husband re plied. 'It is my feelings that are outraged, when ever you try to pass off injustice as a duty, and ut right courses as a moral ideal. The few that I are

righteousness as a moral ideal The fact, that I ar incapable of stealing, is not due to my possessin logical facultes, but to my having some feeling o respect for myself and love for ideals.'

I was raging inwardly. At last I could keep silen no longer. 'Is not the history of every country,'

cried, whether England, France, Germany, or Russia, the history of stealing for the sake of one's own country?"

A They have to appropr for these thefts: they are

'They have to answer for these thefts; they are

doing so even now; their history is not yet ended.'
'At any rate,' interposed Sandip Babu, 'why
should we not follow suit?' Let us first fill our
country's coffers with stolen goods and then take

centuries, like these other countries, to answer for them, if we must. But, I ask you, where do you find this "answering" in history?" 'When Rome was answering for her sin no one

When Rome was answering for her sin no one knew it. All that time, there was apparently no limit to her prosperity. But do you not see one



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Sandip Babu leapt to his feet with uplifted arms

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and shouted 'Hurrah!'—The next moment he corrected himself and cried 'Bande Malaram.'

A shadow of pain passed over the face of my husband. He said to me in a very gentle voice: 'Neither am I divine: I am luman. And therefore I dare not permit the evil which is in me to be exaggerated into an image of my country,—never, never!'

Sandip Babu cried out. 'See, Nikhil, how in the heart of a woman Truth takes flesh and blood. Woman knows how to be cruel her virulence is like a blind storm. It is beautifully fearful. In man it is ugly, because it harbours in its centre the gnawing worms of reason and thought I tell you, Nikhil, it is our women who will save the country. This is not the time for nice scruples unswervingly, uncreasoningly brutal. We must be unswervingly, uncreasoningly brutal. We must sin. We must give our women red sandal paste with which to anonit and entirone our sin. Don't you remember what the poet says.

Smear our breasts with the blackest mud of disrepute, un-

ashamed

Down with that righteousness, which cannot smilingly bring rack and ruin.*

When Sandip Babu, standing with his head high, insulted at a moment's impulse all that men have

pirit of fire, which burns the home to ashes and ights up the larger world with its flame s the indomitable courage to go to the bottom of Ruin itself. Impart grace to all that is baneful." It was not clear to whom Sandip Babu addressed is last appeal. It might have been She whom he worshipped with his Bande Mataram It might have ocen the Womanhood of his country. Or it might have been his representative, the woman before him

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He would have gone further in the same strain, but my husband suddenly rose from his seat and touched him lightly on the shoulder saving 'Sandin Chandranath Babu is here' I started and turned round, to find an aged gentleman at the door, calm and dignified, in doubt

as to whether he should come in or retire. His face was touched with a gentle light like that of the set-

My husband came up to me and whispered . ' This is my master, of whom I have so often told you.

I bent reverently and took the dust of his feet.

ting sun.

Make your obeisance to him '

He gave me his blessing saving: 'May God protect you always, my little mother' I was sorely in need of such a blessing at that moment.

NIKITL'S STORY

I used to test my strength of mind by imaginall kinds of evil which might happen to m poverty, imprisonment, dishonour, death, e-ven mala's And when I said to myself that I should able to receive these with firmness, I am sure I not exaggerate Only I could never even imag one thing, and to-day it is that of which I am thi

One day I had the faith to believe that I she be able to bear whatever came from my God never had the trial Now I think it has come.

ing, and wondering whether I can really bear There is a thorn somewhere pricking in my het constantly giving me pain while I am about daily work. It seems to persist even when I saleep. The very moment I wake up in the moing, I find that the bloom has gone from the face the sky. What is it? What has happened?

My mind has become so sensitive, that even repast life, which came to me in the disguise of happeness, seems to wring my very heart with its fall.

must see.

The day has come at ! ... i.en my ill-starred life

as to reveal its destitution in a long-drawn series exposures. This penury, all unexpected, has then its seat in the heart where plenitude seemed or reign. The fees which I paid to delusion for just ine years of my youth have now to be returned ith interest to Truth till the end of my days.

vith interest to Truth till the end of my days. What is the use of straining to keep up my pride? Vhat harm if I confess that I have something lacking in me? Possibly it is that unreasoning forcefuless which women love to find in men. But is trength a mere display of muscularity? Must trength have no scruples in treading the weak inderfoot?

Indertoot?

But why all these arguments? Worthiness cantot be earned merely by disputing about it. And
am unworthy, unworthy, unworthy.

What if I am unworthy? The true value of love is this, that it can ever bless the unworthy with its pown produgality. For the worthy there are many rewards on God's earth, but God has specially re-

served love for the unworthy

Up till now Bimala was my home-made Bimala, the product of the confined space and the daily routine of small dutes Did the love which I received from her, I asked myself, come from the deep spring of her heart, or was it merely like the daily provision of pipe water pumped up by the muni-

cipal steam-engine of society?

I longed to find Bimala blossoming fully in all her truth and power. But the thing I forgot to

calculate was, that one must give up all claims be on conventional rights, if one would find a pefreely revealed in truth

Why did I fail to think of this? Was it becoft the Insthand's pride of possession over his w. No. It was because I placed the fullest trust n. love. I was vann enough to think that I had power in me to bear the sight of truth in its an nakedness. It was tempting Providence, but it clume to my proud determination to come out.

torious in the trial.

Binala had failed to understand me in one this She could not fully realise that I held as weakt all imposition of force. Only the weak dare not just. They shirk their responsibility of fairness try quickly to get at results through the short-

of injustice Bimala has no patience with patients
She loves to find in men the turbulent, the ang
the unjust Her respect must have its element
fear.

I had hoped that when Bimala found herself fe

I had hoped that when Bimals found herself fin the outer world she would be rescued from I infatuation for tyranny But now I feel sure it this infatuation is deep down in her nature. It love is for the bosterous. From the tip of hongue to the pit of her stomach she must ting with red pepper in order to enjoy the simple fare life. But my determination was, never to do in the with frantic impetuosity, helped on by the fieldour of excitement. I know Bimala finds it the liquor of excitement.

ult to respect me for this, taking my scruples for rebleness,—and she is quite angry with me because am not running amuek crying Bande Mataram.

For the matter of that, I have become unpopular it hall my countrymen because I have not joined nem in their carousals. They are certain that either have a longing for some tule, or else that I am fraid of the police. The police on their side suscett me of harbouring some hidden deugn and proesting too much in my middness.

What I really feel is this, that those who cannot ind food for their enthusiasm in a knowledge of heir country as it actually is, or those who cannot ove men just because they are men,—who needs must shout and delf) their country in order to keep in their excitement,—these love excitement more han their country

To try to give our infatuation a higher place than Fruth is a sign of inherent slavishness. Where our ninds are free we find ourselves lost. Our mori-pand vitality must have for its rider either some antasy, or some one in authority, or a sanction from the pundits, in order to make it move. So long as a e are impervious to truth and have to be moved by some hypnotic stimulus, we must know that we lack the capacity for self-government. Whatever may be our condition, we shall either need some imaginary ghost or some actual medicine-man to tetrories over us.

The other day when Sandip accused me of lack

rs.

of imagination, saving that this prevented me from training my country in a viuble image, filmala agreed with him I that not say anything in me defence, became to win in argument does not lead to happiness. Her difference of agunion is not due to any inequality of intelligence, but rather to dis-

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similarity of nature. They accuse me of being unimaginative,-thatis, according to them, I may have oil in my lamp, but no flame. Now this is exactly the accusation which I bring against them I would say to them: "You are dark, even as the flints are You must come to violent conflicts and make a noise in order to pro-

duce your sparks But their disconnected flasher merely assist your pride, and not your clear vision. I have been noticing for some time that there is a gross cupidity about Sandip His Heshly feeling

make him harbour delusions about his religion and impel him into a tyrannical attitude in his patriousm His intellect is keen, but his nature is coarse, and so he glorifies his selfish fusts under highsounding names The cheap consolations of hatred are as urgently necessary for lum as the satisfaction of his appetites. Bimala has often warned me, in the old days, of his hankering after money. I understood this, but I could not bring myself to haggle with Sandip. I felt ashamed even to own to myself that he was trying to possadvantas of me. 'a Bimala

It will, however, 1 to-day that Sandir

phase of his covetous self-love. Bimala's hero-worhip of Sandip makes me hesitate all the more to
talk to her about him, lest some touch of jealousy
may lead me unwittingly into exaggeration. It
may be that the pain at my heart is already making
me see a distorted picture of Sandip. And yet it is
better perhaps to speak out than to keep my feelings
gnawing within me.

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Neither calumny, nor disaster, nor death iself has any terrors for him Nothing could have saved me, born as I was into the traditions of this family of ours, but that he has established his own life in the centre of mune, with its peace and truth and sprintual vision, thus making it possible for me to realise goodness in its truth.

I have known my master these thirty years,

My master came to me that day and said, 'Is it necessary to detain Sandin here any longer?'

His nature was so sensitive to all omens of evil that he had at once understood He was not easily moved, but that day he felt the dark shadow of trouble ahead. Do I not know how well he loves me?

At tea-time I said to Sandip 'I have just had a letter from Rangpur They are complaining that I am selfishly detaming you. When will you be going there?"

Bimala was pouring out the tea. Her face fell at once. She threw just one enquiring glance at Sandip.

CH.

'I have been thinking,' said Sandip, 'that this wandering up and down means a tremendous waste of energy. I feel that if I could work from a centre I could achieve more permanent results.'

With this he looked up at Bimala and asked: 'Do

you not think so too?

Bimala hesitated for a reply and then said: 'Both ways seem good,—to do the work from a centre, as well as by travelling about. That in which you find greater satisfaction is the way for you.'

when as by traveling about. That in winch yellind greater satisfaction is the way for you."

'Then let me speak out my mind,' said Sandip.'

'I have never yet found any one source of inspiration suffice me for good. That is why I have been constantly moving about, rousing enthusiasm in the people, from which in turn I draw my own store of energy. To-day you have given me the message of my country. Such fire I have never belied in any man. I shall be able to spread the fire of enthusiasm in my country by borrowing it from you. No, do not be ashamed. You are far above all modesty and diffidence. You are the Queen Bee of our hive, and we the workers shall rally around you. You shall be our centre, our inspiration.'

Bimala flushed all over with bashful pride and her hand shook as she went on pouring out the tea

Another day my master came to me and said:
'Why don't you two go up to Darjeeling for a
change? You are not looking well Have you
been getting enough sleep?'

I asked Bimala in the evering whether she would

care to have a trip to the Hills. I knew she had a great longing to see the Himalayas. But she refused... The country's Cause, I suppose!

I must not lose my fault: I shall wait. The passage from the narrow to the larger world is stormy.
When she is familiar with this freedom, then I shall
know where my place is If I discover that I do not
fit in with the arrangement of the outer world, then
I shall not quarrel with my fate, but silently take
my leave . Use force? But for what? Can
force prevail against Truth?

SANDIP'S STORY

The impotent man says 'That which has come to my share is mine' And the weak man assents. But the lesson of the whole world is 'That is really mine which I can snatch awas' My country does not become mine simply because it is the country of my birth. It becomes mine on the day when I am able to win it by force

Every man has a natural right to posses, and therefore greed is natural. It is not in the wisdom of nature that we should be content to be deprived. What my mind covets, my surroundings must supply. This is the only true understanding between our inner and outer nature in this world. Let moral ideals remain merely for those poor anaentic creatures of starved desire whose grasp is weak.

Those who can desire with all their soul and enjo with all their heart, those who have no hesitation o scruple, it is they who are the anointed of Provi dence. Nature spreads out her richest and love

liest treasures for their benefit. They swim acros streams, leap over walls, kick open doors, to help themselves to whatever is worth taking. In such a getting one can repoice, such wresting as this gives

value to the thing taken. Nature surrenders herself, but only to the robber. For she delights in this forceful desire, this forceful abduction And so she does not put the garland of her acceptance round the lean, scraggy neck of the ascetic The music of the wedding march is struck.

The time of the wedding I must not let pass My heart therefore is eager. For, who is the bridegroom? It is I The bridegroom's place belongs to him who, torch in hand, can come in time The bridegroom in Nature's wedding hall comes unexpected and uninvited Ashamed? No, I am never ashamed! I ask for whatever I want, and I do not always wait to ask before I take it Those who are deprived by their own diffidence dignify their privation by the name of modesty The world into which we are born is he world of reality. When a man goes away from he market of real things with empty hands and

empty stomach, merely filling his bag with big ounding words, I wonder why he ever came into his hard world at all. Did these men get their an-AL STATE

ointment from the epicures of the religious world, play set tunes on sweet pious texts in that pleasure arden where blossom airy nothings? I neither ffect those tunes nor do I find any sustenance in hose blossoms.

ffect those tunes nor do 1 find any sustenance in hose blossoms.

What I desire, I desire positively, superlatively, want to knead it with both my hands and both my eet; I want to smear it all over my body; I want to gorge myself with it to the full. The scrannel pipes of those who have worn themselves out by their noral fastings, till they have become flat and pale ike starved vermin infesting a long-deserted bed, vill never reach my ear.

I would conceal nothing, because that would be cowardly. But if I cannot bring myself to conceal when concealment is needful, that also is cowardly. Because you have your greed, you build your walls. Because I have my greed, I break through them. You use your power I use my craft. These are the realities of life. On these depend kingdoms and comings and all the great enterprises of you.

the realities of life. On these depend kingdoms and empires and all the great enterprises of men. As for those avatars who come down from their paradise to talk to us m some holy jargon—their words are not real. Therefore, in spite of all the applause they get, these sayings of theirs only find a place in the hidding corners of the weak. They are despised by those who are strong, the rulers of the world. Those who have had the courage to see this have won success, while those poor wretches who are dragged one way by nature and the other

way by these arataes, they set one foot in the boat of the real and the other in the boat of the mareal, and thus are in a punable plight, able neither to advance nor to keep their obse

There are many men who seem to have been born only with an obsession to die. Possibly there is a beauty, like that of a univer, in this lingering death in life which seems to faccinate them Nikhil lives this kind of life, if life it may be called. Years ago, I had a great argument with him on this point.

'It is true,' he yaid, 'that you cannot get any-

thing except by force—But then what is this force? And then also, what is this getting?—The strength I believe in 15 the strength of renouncing?

'So you,' I exclaimed, 'are infatuated with the glory of bankruptes'

'Just as desperately as the chick is infatuated about the bankrupter of its shell,' he replied. 'The shell is real enough, yet it is given up in exchange for intangible light and air. A sorry exchange, I appears you would call it?'

suppose you would call it?

When once Nikhil gets on to metaphor, there is no hope of making him see that he is merely dealing with words, not with realities. Well, well, let him be happy with his metaphors. We are the flesh-eaters of the world; we have teeth and nails; we pursue and grab and tear. We are not satisfied with chewing in the evening the cud of the grass we

allow your metaphor-mongers to bar the door to our sustenance. In that case we shall simply steal or rob, for we must live

People will say that I am starting some novel theory, just because those who are moving in this world are in the habit of talking differently though they are really acting up to it all the time. Therefore they fail to understand, as I do, that this is the only working moral principle. In pour of fact, I know that my idea is not an empty theory at all, for it has been proved in practical life. I have found that my way always wins over the hearts of women, who are creatures of this world of reality and do not roam about in cloud-land, as men do, in idea-filled balloons.

Women find in my features, my manner, my gait,

Women find in my features, my manner, my gait, my speech, a masterful passion, -not a passion dried thin with the heat of asceticism, not a passion with its face turned back at every step in doubt and debate, but a full-blooded passion. It roars and rolls on, like a flood, with the cry 'I want. I want. I want' Women feel, in their own heart of hearts, that this indomitable passion is the lifeblood of the world, acknowledging no law but itself, and therefore victorious For this reason they have so often abandoned themselves to be swept away on the flood-tide of my passion, recking naught as to whether it takes them to life or to death This power which wins these women is the power of mighty men, the power which wins the world of reality,



For Sandip Babu was not a mere individual. In im was the confluence of millions of minds of the

ountry. When he called me the Oucen Bee of the ive, I was acclaimed with a chorus of praise by all ur patriot workers After that, the loud jests of y sister-in-law could not touch me any longer fy relations with all the world underwent a change andip Babu made it clear how all the country was need of me I had no difficulty in believing this t the time, for I felt that I had the power to do erything Divine strength had come to me. It as something which I had never felt before, which as beyond myself I had no time to question it find out what was its nature It seemed to being to me, and yet to transcend me. It compre-

ended the whole of Bengal. Sandip Babu would consult me about every little ing touching the Cause At first I felt very awk-

He only

unk. You women have a way of understanding rithout thinking. Woman was created out of od's own fancy Man, He had to hammer into anc. Letters used to come to Sandip Babu from all

arts of the country which were submitted to me for ny opinion. Occasionally he disagreed with me. in I would not argue with him. Then after a dar t two, as if a new light had suddenly dawner pon him, he would send for me and as: 'It wa

ny unitake. Your suggestion was the correct one, le would often confess to me that wherever he had

oken steps contrary to my advice he had gone tong. Thus I gradually came to be consinced an behind whatever was taking place was Sandip Jahu, and behind Sandip Babu was the plain common sense of a woman. The glory of a great resonstibility filled my being.

My hisband had no place in our counsels. San-

p Babu treated him as a vounger brother, of hom personally one may be very foul and yet

ave no use for his business advice. He would tenrely and similingly talk about my husband's childle innocence, saving that his curious docurine and recristics of mind had a flavour of humour which adde them all the more lovable. It was seemingly is very affection for Nikhil which led Sandip Babu forbear from troubling him with the burden of e country.

Nature has many anodynes in her pharmacy, nich she secretly administers when vital relations

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at is outside it. When, like the river, we women ep to our banks, we give nourishment with all at we have: when we overflow them we destroy th all that we are

SANDIP'S STORY

I can see that something has gone wrong I got inkling of it the other day Ever since my arrival, Nikhil's sitting-room had

come a thing amphibious,-half women's apartent, half men's: Bimala had access to it from the mana, it was not barred to me from the outer side. we had only gone slow, and made use of our prileges with some restraint, we might not have fallen ul of other neople. But we went ahead so veheently that we could not think of the consequences. Whenever Bee comes into Nikhil's room, I somes ow get to know of it from mine There are the akle of bangles and other little sounds; the door is erhaps shut with a shade of unnecessary veheence: the bookcase is a trifle stiff and creaks if rked open. When I enter I find Bee, with her ack to the door, ever so busy selecting a book from ie shelves. And as I offer to assist her in this

ifficult task she starts and protests; and then we

aturally get on to other topics.

The other day, on an inauspicious Thursd afternoon, I sallied forth from my room at the c of these same sounds. There was a man on gua in the passage I walked on without so much glancing at him, but as I approached the door nut himself in my way saying. 'Not that way, it

'Not that way! Why?'
'The Rani Mother is there'

'Oh, very well Tell your Rans Mother the

Sandip Babu wants to see her.'

'That cannot be, sir It is against orders'

I felt highly indignant 'I order you!' I said in a raised voice 'Go and announce me.'

The fellow was somewhat taken aback at my attitude. In the meantime I had neared the door I was on the point of reaching it, when he follower

I was on the point of reaching it, when he follower after me and took me by the arm saying. 'No, sir you must not' What! To be touched by a flunkey! I snatched

What! To be touched by a flunkey! I snatched away my arm and gave the man a sounding blow. At this moment Bee came out of the room to find the man about to insult me

I shall never forget the picture of her wrath!
That Bee is beautiful is a discovery of my own.
Most of our people would see nothing in her. Her
tall, slim figure these boors would call 'lanky,'
But it is just this littlesomeness of hers that I admite,—the an up-leaping fountain of life, coming
direct out of the depths of the Creator's heart.

Her complexion is dark, but it is the lustrous darkless of a sword-blade, keen and semtillating.
'Nanku!' she commanded, as she stood in the

oorway, pointing with her finger, 'leave us.'

'Do not be angry with him,' said I 'If it is

gainst orders, it is I who should retire.'

Bee's voice was still trembling as she replied: You must not go. Come in ' It was not a request, but again a command! I

ollowed her in, and taking a chair fanned myself with a fan which was on the table. Bee scribbled iomething with a pencil on a sheet of paper and, jummoning a servant, handed it to him saying: Take this to the Maharaja

'Forgive me,' I resumed 'I was imable to control myself, and hit that man of yours.'
'You served him right,' said Bee.

'But it was not the poor fellow's fault, after all.

He was only obeying his orders.

Here Nikhil came in, and as he did so I left my
seat with a rapid movement and went and stood.

near the window with my back to the room.

'Nanku, the guard, has insulted Sandip Babu,'

said Bee to Nikhil.

Nikhil seemed to be so genuinely surprised that I

had to turn round and stare at hum. Even an outrageously good man fails in keeping up his pride of truthfulness before his wife,—if she be the proper kind of woman.

'He insolently stood in the way when Sandip

62 cH. · He Babu was coming in here,' continued Bee.

said he had orders. . . . 'Whose orders?' asked Nikhil

' How am I to know?' exclaimed Bee impatiently,

her eyes brimming over with mortification Nikhil sent for the man and questioned him.

was not my fault,' Nanku repeated sullenly. had my orders.'

'Who gave you the order?"

'The Bara Rant Mother'

We were all silent for a while After the man had left, Bee said, 'Nanku must go!'

Nikhil remained silent. I could see that his sense of justice would not allow this. There was no end to his qualms. But this time he was up against a tough problem. Bee was not the woman to take

things lying down She would have to get even with her sister-in-law by punishing this fellow. And as Nikhil remained silent, her eyes flashed fire She enew not how to pour her scorn upon her husband's feebleness of spirit. Nikhil left the room after a while without another word.

The next day Nanku was not to be seen. On enquiry, I learn that he had been sent off to some other part of the estates, and that his wages had not suffered by such transfer.

I could catch glimpses of the ravages of the storm ming ther this, behind the seenes. All I can say

ontrivance, or pretence of its being an accident. Thus from bare suggestion we came to broad hint: he implied came to be expressed The daughter-inaw of a princely house lives in a starry region so emote from the ordinary outsider that there is not even a regular road for his approach. What a triumphal progress of Truth was this which, gradually but persistently, thrust aside veil after veil of obscuring custom, till at length Nature herself was aid hare

or me to the sitting-room, for a chat, without any

SANDIP'S STORY

tal. The whole world of matter, from the speck of dust upwards, is ranged on its side. And yet men would keep it hidden away out of sight, behind a tissue of words, and with home-made sanctions and prohibitions make of it a domestic utensil. Why, it's as absurd as melting down the solar system to make a watch-chain for one's son-in-law!1

Truth? Of course it was the truth! The attraction of man and woman for each other is fundamen-

When, in spite of all, reality awakes at the call of what is but naked truth, what a gnashing of teeth and beating of breasts is there! But can one carry on a quarrel with a storm? It never takes the trouble to reply, it only gives a shaking.

I am emoving the sight of this truth, as it gradually reveals itself. These tremblings of steps, these turnings of the face, are sweet to me; and sweet are

The son-un-law as the pet of a Hundu household

CH,

the deceptions which deceive not only others, but also Bee herself When Reality has to meet the unreal, deception is its principal weapon; for its enemies always try to shame Reality by calling it gross, and so it needs must hide itself, or else put on some disguise. The circumstances are such that it dare not frankly avow. 'Yes, I am gross, because I am true. I am flesh I am passion I am himger, unashamed and cruel

All is now clear to me The curtain flaps, and through it I can see the preparations for the catastrophe. The little red ribbon, which peeps through the luxuriant masses of her hair, with its flish of secret longing, it is the lolling tongue of the red storm cloud I feel the warmth of each turn of her san, each suggestion of her raiment, of which even the wearer may not be fully conscious

Bee was not conscious, because she was ashamed of the reality, to which men have given a bad name, calling it Satan, and so it has to steal into the garden of parachse in the guise of a make, and whisper secrets into the ears of man's chosen consort and make her rebellions, then farewell to all ease; and

after that comes death! My poor little Queen Bee it living in a dream-She knows not which was she is treading. It would not be safe to awaken her before the time. It is lest for me to present to be equally unconscious.

The other day, at dinner, the was giving at me in

away with a flush 'You are surprised at my appetite. I remarked 'I can hide everything, except that I am greedy! Anyhow, why trouble to blush for me, since I am shameless? This only made her colour more furiously, as she

SANDIP'S STORY

stammered: 'No, no, I was only .' 'I know,' I interrupted 'Women have a weakness for greedy men, for it is this greed of ours which

gives then the upper hand The indulgence which I have always received at their hands has made me all the more shameless I do not mind your watching the good things disappear, not one bit. I mean

to enjoy every one of them ' The other day I was reading an English book in

which sex-problems were treated in an audaciously realistic manner. I had left it lying in the sittingroom. As I went there the next afternoon, for something or other, I found Bee seated with this book in her hand. When she heard my footsteps she hurriedly put it down and placed another book over it-a volume of Mrs. Hemans's poems

'I have never been able to make out,' I began, why women are so shy about being caught reading poetry. We men-lawyers, mechanics, or what not .- may well feel ashamed. If we must read poetry, it should be at dead of night, within closed doors. But you women are so akin to poesy. The n. w.-3

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Greator Himself is a lytic poet, and Jayadeva must have practised the divine art seated at His feet. Bee made no reply, but only blushed uncomfortably. She made as if she would leave the room.

CH.

tably. She made as if she would leave the room. Whereupon I protested. 'No, no, pray read on. I will just take a book I left here, and run away.' With which I took up my book from the table. 'Lucky you did not think of glancing over its pages,' I continued, 'or you would have wanted to chastie

me.'
'Indeed! Why?' asked Bee

'Because it is not poetry,' said I. 'Only blunt things, bluntly put, without any finicking niceness. I wish Nikhil would read it'

Bee frowned a little as she murmured 'What makes you wish that?'

'He is a man, you see, one of us. My only quarrel with him is that he delights in a misty vision of this world. Have you not observed how this trait of his makes him look on Swadeshi as if it was some poem of which the metre must be kept correct at every step? We, with the clubs of our prose, are

the iconoclasts of metre."

What has your book to do with Swadeshi "
You would know if you only read it. Nikhil
wants to go by made-up maxims, in Swadeshi as in
everything else; so he knocks up against human
everything and then falls to a busing it.

nature at every turn, and then falls to abusing it,

e never will realise that human nature was creatl long before phrases were, and will survive them ٥., Bee was silent for a while and then gravely said:

is it not a part of human nature to try and rise perior to itself?

I smiled inwardly 'These are not your words,' thought to myself 'You have learnt them from ikhil, You are a healthy human being. Your sh and blood have responded to the call of reality. ou are burning in every vein with life-fire,-do I

ot know it? How long should they keep you cool

ith the wet towel of moral precepts?" 'The weak are in the majority,' I said aloud. They are continually poisoning the ears of men by peating these shibboleths. Nature has denied nem strength, -it is thus that they try to enfeeble hers. 'We women are weak,' replied Bimala. 'So I ippose we must join in the conspiracy of the weak."

'Women weak!' I exclaimed with a laugh, Men belaud you as delicate and fragile, so as to elude you into thinking yourselves weak. But it you women who are strong Men make a great utward show of their so-called freedom, but those ho know their inner minds are aware of their ondage. They have manufactured scriptures with heir own hands to bind themselves; with their very lealism they have made golden fetters of women to ind round their body and mind. If men had not 68

that extraordinary faculty of entangling themselves in meshes of their own contriving, nothing could have kept them bound have desired to conceive reality with body and soul You have given birth to reality. You have suckled

reality at your breasts.

Bee was well read for a woman, and would not easily give in to my arguments. If that were true, she objected, 'men would not have found women attention.'

'Women realise the danger,' I replied, 'They know that men love ilelution, so they give them full measure in borrowing their own phrases. They know that man, the drunkard, values intockation more than food, and so they try to pais themselve off as an intovician. 'V a matter of fact, but for the sake of man, woman has no need for any makebelies.'

"Why, then, are you troubling to destroy the illusion?"

'For freedom: I want the country to be free. I want human relations to be free.'

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I was aware that it is unrate outstend, to awake a deepwalker. But I am an impetuors by nature, a before fair these not suit me. I know I was over to lifthat day. I know that the fair thock of such beas in art to be afrons into leading. But worth worse to a locate auditors that they will be a form the afrons into leading.

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in but Nikhil's old tutor Chandranath Babu. The world would have been not half a bad place to live in but for these schoolmasters, who make one want to quit it in disgust The Nikhıl type wants to keen the world always a school This incarnation of a school turned up that afternoon at the psychological moment.

We all remain schoolboys in some corner of our hearts, and I, even I, felt somewhat pulled up. As for poor Bee, she at once took her place solemnly. like the topmost girl of the class on the front bench All of a sudden she seemed to remember that she had to face her examination

Some people are so like eternal pointsmen lying in wait by the line, to shunt one's train of thought from one rail to another

Chandranath Babu had no sooner come in than he east about for some excuse to reure, mumbling: 'I beg your pardon, I

Before he could finish, Bee went up to him and made a profound obeisance, saying ' Pray do not leave us, sir. Will you not take a seat?' She looked like a drowning person clutching at him for support,-the little coward

But possibly I was mistaken. It is quite likely

that there was a touch of womanly wile in it. She wanted, perhaps, to raise her value in my eyes. She might have been pointedly saving to me; 'Please don't imagine for a moment that I am entirely overcome by you. My respect for Chandranath

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Babu is even greater.' Well, indulge in your respect by all means'

Schoolmasters thrive on it. But not being one of them, I have no use for that empty compliment.

Chandranath Babu began to talk about Swadeshi. I thought I would let him go on with his monologues. There is nothing like letting an old man

talk himself out. It makes him feel that he is winding up the world, forgetting all the while how far away the real world is from his wagging tongue But even my worst enemy would not accuse me of patience. And when Chandranath Babu went on to say. ' If we expect to gather fruit where we have sown no seed, then we. ' I had to interrupt him.

'Who wants fruit?' I cried 'We go by the Author of the Gua who says that we are concerned only with the doing, not with the fruit of our deeds." 'What is it then that you do want?' asked Chan-

dranath Babu 'Thorns!' I exclaimed, 'which cost nothing to

nlant '

'Thorns do not obstruct others only,' he replied. They have a way of hurting one's own feet.'

'That is all right for a copy-book,' I retorted. But the real thing is that we have this burning at heart. Now we have only to cultivate thorns for others' soles; afterwards when they hurt us we shall and leisure to repent. But why be frightened even

of that? When at last we have to die it will be time enough to get cold While we are on fire let us seethe and boil.

Chandranath Babu smiled. 'Seethe by all means,' he said, 'but do not mistake it for work, or

heroism. Nations which have got on in the world have done so by action, not by chillition. Those who have always lain in dread of work, when with a start they awake to their sorry plight, they look to short cuts and scamping for their deliverance.' I was griding up my louis to deliver a crushing

reply, when Nikhil eame back. Chandranath Babu rose, and looking towards Bee, said 'Let me go now, my little mother, I have some work to attend to.' As he left, I showed Nikhil the book in my hand.' 'I was telling Queen Bee about this book,' I said. Niettwan curve sur Chandle have the delived.

As he left, I showed Nikhil the book in my hand.

'I was telling Queen Bee about this book,' I said.

Ninety-nine per cent of people have to be deluded with lies, but it is easier to delude this perpetual pupil of the schoolmaster with the truth. He is best cheated openly. So, in playing with him, the simplest course was to lay my cards on the table.

Nikhil read the tutle on the cover, but said no-

their brooms, sweeping away the dust of epithets with which men have covered up this world of ours. So, as I was saying, I wash you would read it' I have read it,' said Nikhii.

'Well, what do you say?'
It is all very well for those who really care to

thing. 'These writers,' I continued, ' are busy with

'It is all very well for those who really care t think, but poison for those who shirk thought.' 72

'What do you mean?'

'Those who preach "Equal Rights of Propert should not be thieves For, if they are, they wo be preaching lies. When passion is in the asc dant, this kind of book is not rightly understood

'Passion,' I replied, 'is the street lamp wh guides us. To eall it untrue is as hopeless as expect to see better by plucking out our natu

eves.

Nikhil was visibly growing excited, 'I acce the truth of passion,' he said, 'only when I recc nise the truth of restraint By pressing what v want to see right into our eyes we only injure ther we do not see So does the violence of passio which would leave no space between the mind at its object, defeat its purpose.'

'It is simply your intellectual foppery,' I replied which makes you indulge in moral delicacy, isnoring the savage side of truth. This merely helps you to mystify things, and so you fail to do your work with any degree of strength ' 'The intrusion of strength,' said Nikhil impatient-

ly, ' where strength is out of place, does not help you in your work . But why are we arguing about these things? Vain arguments only brush off the fresh bloom of truth."

I wanted Bee to join in the discussion, but she had not said a word up to now. Could I have given assailed with

n afresh from

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supposed to be unshakeable can be shaken I am glad I had this talk with you,' I said to Nikhil, ' for I was on the point of lending this book

book, why not Bimala too? All I want to say is, that in Europe people look at everything from the view-point of science But man is neither mere

to Oueen Bee to read ' 'What harm?' said Nikhil 'If I could read the

Ire

physiology, nor biology, nor psychology, nor even sociology For God's sake don't forget that Man is infinitely more than the natural science of himself You laugh at me, calling me the schoolmaster's pupil, but that is what you are, not I. You want to find the truth of man from your science teachers, and not from your own inner being, 'But why all this excitement?' I mocked.

' Because I see you are bent on insulting man and making him petty.'

'Where on earth do you see all that?' 'In the air, in my outraged feelings. You would

go on wounding the great, the unselfish, the beautiful in man '

'What mad idea is this of yours?'

Nikhil suddenly stood up 'I tell you plainly, Sandip,' he said, ' man may be wounded unto death. but he will not die This is the reason why I am ready to suffer all, knowing all, with eyes open.'

With these words he hurriedly left the room.

I was staring blankly at his ertreating figure, who

7;

the sound of a book, falling from the table, mader turn to find liee following him with quick, nervous steps, making a detour to avoid passing too near me

A curious creature, that Nikhil! He feels the danger threatening his home, and yet why does he more turn me out? I know, he is waiting for Birma to give him the cue. If Birnal tells him that the mating has been a misfit, he will bow his head and admit that it may have been a blunder! He hand the tirregist of mind to understand that to asknowledge a mistake is the greatest of all mistakes. He is a typical example of how ideas make for weak ness. I have not seen another like him,—so whim sical a product of nature! He would hardly do as character in a novel or drama, to say nothing or real life.

And Bee? I am afraid her dream-life is one from to-day. She has at length understood the nature of the current which is bearing her along Now she must either advance or retreat, open-eyed. The chances are she will now advance a step, and then retreat a step. But that does not disturb me. When one is on fire, this rushing to and fio makes the blaze all the ferever. The fright she has got will only fan her passion

Perhaps I had better not say much to her, but simply select some modern books for her to read, the conviction that to the Fifth Act. I cannot, unfortunately, boast of being merely a spectator, seated in the royal box, applauding now and again. There is a wrench at my heart, a pang mevery nerve. When I have put out the light and am my bed, little touches, little

SANDIP'S STORY

glances, bittle words flit about and fill the darkness. When I get up in the morning, I thrill with lively anticipations, my blood seems to course through me to the strains of muse.

There was a double photo-frame on the table with Bee's photograph by the side of Nikhul's I had taken out hers Yesterday I showed Bee the empty side and said: 'Theft becomes necessary only be-

taken out hers Yesterday I showed Bee the empty side and said: 'Theft becomes necessary only because of musefiness, so its sin must be divided between the miser and the thief Do you not think so?'

It was not a good one,' observed Bee simply,

so?' It was not a good one,' observed Bee simply, with a little smile
'What is to be done?' said I. 'A portrait cannot be better than a portrait. I must be content with it, such as it is'

Bee took up a book and began to turn over the pages. 'If you are annoyed,' I went on, 'I must make a shift to fill up the vacancy'
Today I have filled it up. This photograph of

make a shift to fill up the vacancy '
To-day I have filled it up. This photograph of
mine was taken in my early youth. My face was

THE HOME AND THE WORLD then fresher, and so was my mind. Then I still cherished some illusions about this world and the next. Faith deceives men, but it has one great

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merit: it imparts a radiance to the features. My portrait now reposes next to Nikhil's, for are

not the two of us old friends?

CHAPTER IV

NIKHIL'S STORY

TIT

I was never self-conscious But nowadays I often try to take an outside view, — to see myself as Bimal sees me What a dismally solemn picture it makes, my habit of taking things too seriously!

Better, surely, to laugh away the world than flood it with tears That is, in fact, how the world gets on. We relish our food and rest, only because we can dismise, as so many empty shadows, the sorrows

on, We reism our 100d and rest, only occause we can dismiss, as so many empty shadows, the sorrows scattered everywhere, both in the home and in the outer world. If we took them as true, even for a moment, where would be our appetite, our sleep? But I cannot dismiss myself as one of these sha-

But I cannot dismiss myself as one of these shadows, and so the load of my sorrow lies eternally heavy on the heart of my world.

Why not stand out aloof in the highway of the universe, and feel yourself to be part of the all? In the midst of the immense, age-long concourse of humanity, what is Bimal to you? Your wife? What is a wife? A bubble of a name blown big with your own breath, so carefully guarded night and day, yet ready to burst at any bin-prick from outside.

My wife,—and so, forsooth, my very own! If she says: 'No, I am myself,'—am I to reply: 'How can that he?' Are you not mine?'

'My wife,'-Does that amount to an argument, much less the truth? Can nne imprison a whole ersonality within that name?

My wife!- Have 1 not cherished in this little orld all that is purest and sweetest in my life, neve or a moment letting it down from my bosom to th ust? What incense of worship, what music o assion, what flowers of my spring and of m utumn, have I not offered up at its shrine? If ke a toy paper-boat, she be swept along into the

uddy waters of the gutter .- would I not also. .! There it is again, my incorrigible solemnity. Thy 'muddy '? What 'gutter '? Names, called a fit of jealousy, do not change the facts of the orld. If Bimal is not mine, she is not: and no ming, or fretting, or arguing will serve to prove at she is. If my heart is breaking-let it break! hat will not make the world bankrupt,-nor even e: for man is so much greater than the things he ses in this life. The very ocean of tears has its her shore, else none would have ever went. But then there is Society to be considered ich let Society consider! If I weep it is for my-

f. not for Society. If Bimal should say she is not ine, what care I where my Society wife may be? Suffering there must be, but I must save myself. any means in my power, from one form of selfntute: I must never think that my life loses its alue because of any neglect it may suffer. The ll value of my life does not all go to buy my narrow

domestic world: its great commerce does not stand or fall with some netty success or failure in the bartering of my personal joys and sorrows

The time has come when I must divest Bimala of all the ideal decorations with which I decked her It was owing to my own weakness that I indulged in such idolatry I was too greedy I created an angel of Bimala, in order to exaggerate my own en-

joyment. But Bimala is what she is. It is preposterous to expect that she should assume the rôle of an angel for my pleasure The Creator is under no obligation to supply me with angels, just because I have an avidity for imaginary perfection.

I must acknowledge that I have merely been an aecident in Bimala's life Her nature, perhaps, can only find true union with one like Sandin At the same time, I must not, in false modesty, accept my rejection as my desert Sandap certainly has

attractive qualities, which had their sway also upon

myself; but yet, I feel sure, he is not a greater man than I. If the wreath of victory falls to his lot to-day, and I am overlooked, then the dispenser of the wreath will be called to judgment

I say this in no spirit of boasting. Sheer necessity has driven me to the pass, that to secure myself from utter desolation I must recognise all the value that I truly possess. Therefore, through the terrible experience of suffering let there come upon me the

joy of deliverance, deliverance from self-distrust.

I have come to distinguish what is really in me

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from what I foolshly imagined to be there. The profit and loss account has been settled, and that which remains is myself,—not a crippled self, dressed in rags and tatters, not a sick self to be nursed on invalid diet, but a spriit which has gone through the worst, and has survived

My master passed through my room a moment ago and said with his hand on my shoulder: 'Get away to bed, Nikhil, the night is far advanced.'

The fact is, it has become so difficult for me to go to bed till late,—till Bimal is fast asleep. In the day-time we meet, and even converse, but what am I to say when we are alone together, in the silence of the night?—so ashamed do I feel in mind and body

'How is it, sir. you have not vet retired?' I asked in my turn My master smiled a httle, as he left me, saying: 'My sleeping days are over I have now attained the waking age.'

I had written thus far, and was about to rise to go off bedwards when, through the window before me, I saw the heavy pall of July cloud suddenly part a little, and a big star shine through It seemed to say to me. Dreamland ties are made, and

that my Eternal Love was steadfastly waiting for

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to make the mirror my very own, and shut it up within my box, I have lost sight of the image But what of that? What have I to do with the mirror. or even the image?

NIKHIL'S STORY

My beloved, your smile shall never fade, and every dawn there shall appear fresh for me the ver-

milion mark on your forehead! 'What childish capolery of self-deception,' mocks

some devil from his dark corner, - silly prattle to make children quiech That may be But millions and millions of child-

ren, with their million cries, have to be kept quiet. Can it be that all this multitude is quieted with only a lie? No, my Eternal Love cannot deceive me, for she is true!

She is true: that is why I have seen her and shall see her so often, even in my mistakes, ever through the thickest mist of tears. I have seen her and lost her in the crowd of life's market-place, and found her again; and I shall find her once more when I have escaped through the loop-hole of death

Ah, cruel one, play with me no longer! If I have failed to track you by the marks of your footsteps

on the way, by the scent of your tresses lingering in the air, make me not weep for that for ever. The unveiled star tells me not to fear. That which is cternal must always be there. Now let me go and see my Bimala. She must 82 THE HOME AND THE WORLD

her struggles, and be asleep. I will leave a kiss her forehead without waking her. - that shall be flower-offering of my worship. I believe I cou forget everything after death,-all my mistakes, my sufferings,-but some vibration of the meme. of that kiss would remain, for the wreath which is being woven out of the Lisses of many a successive birth is to crown the Eternal Beloved

have spread her tired limbs on the bed, limp at

As the gong of the watch rang out, sounding the hour of two, my sister-in-law came into the room 'Whatever are you doing, brother dear ?'1 she cried For pity's sake go to bed and stop worrying so. I I could not utter a word, but took the dust of

cannot bear to look on that awful shadow of pain on your face.' Tears welled up to her eyes and overflowed as she entreated me thus her feet, as I went off to bed

come to a gradual, natural end But Sandip Babu would not have it so, he would misst on revealing himself. The tone of his voice became as intimate as a touch, every look flung itself on its knees in beggary. And, through it all, there burned a passion which in its violence made as though it would tear me up by the roots, and drag me along by the hair.

I will not shark the truth This cataclysmal desire drew me by day and by night. It seemed desperately alluving,—this making havor of myself. What a shame it seemed, how terrible, and yet how sweet! Then there was my overpowering curiosity, to which there seemed no limit. He of whom I knew but little, who never could assuredly be mine, whose youth flared so vigorously in a hundred points of flam—oh, the mystery of his seculing

I began with a feeling of worship, but that soon passed away. I ceased even to respect Sandip; on the contrary, I began to look down upon him. Nevertheless this flesh-and-blood lute of mine, fashioned with my feeling and fancy, found in him a masterplayer. What though I shrank from his

passions, so immense, so tumultuous!

touch, and even came to loathe the lute itself; its
as conjured up all the same.

or here was.

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to me. He has the power to lift my mind up to a eminence from where I can see in a moment th boundary of my life extended on all sides and s realise that the lines, which I took from my bounds were merely imaginary.

But what is the use of it all? Do I really desire emancipation? Let suffering come to our house let the best in me shrivel up and become black; but let this infatuation not leave me .- such seems to be my prayer.

When, before my marriage, I used to see a brother-in-law of mine, now dead, mad with drink,beating his wife in his frenzy, and then sobbing and howling in maudlin repentance, vowing never to touch liquor again, and yet, the very same evening, sitting down to drink and drink,-it would fill me with disgust. But my intoxication to-day is still more fearful The stuff has not to be procured or poured out: it springs within my veins, and I know not how to resist it Must this continue to the end of my days? Now

and again I start and look upon myself, and think my life to be a nightmare which will vanish all of a sudden with all its untruth. It has become so frightfully incongruous. It has no connexion with its past. What it is, how it could have come to this pass, I cannot understand.

One day my sister-in-law remarked with a cutting laugh: 'What a wonderfully hospitable Chota Rani we have! Her guest absolutely will not budge. In our time there used to be guests, too; but they had not such lavish looking after,—we were so absurdly taken up with our husbands. Poor brother Nikhil is paying the penalty of being born too modern. He should have come as a guest if he wanted to stay on Now it looks as if it were time for him to quit. O you hittle demon, do your glances never fall, by chance, on his agonised face?

This sarcasm did not touch me, for I knew that these women had it not in them to understand the nature of the cause of my devotion. I was then wrapped in the protecting armour of the evaluation of sacrifice, through which such shafts were powerless to reach and shame me

VIII

For some time all talk of the country's cause has been dropped. Our conversation nowadays has become full of modern sex-problems, and various other matters, with a sprinking of poetry, both old Vashinava and modern English, accompanied by a running undertone of melody, low down in the bass, such as I have never in my life heard before, which seems to me to sound the true manly note, the note of power.

The day had come when all cover was gone. There was no longer even the pretence of a reason dip Babu should linger on, or why I should the state of the cover now and

by vexed with myself, with

to me He has the power to lift my mind up to as

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eminence from where I can see in a moment the boundary of my life extended on all sides and a realise that the lines, which I took from my boundary were merely imaginary. But what is the use of it all? Do I really design

THE HOME AND THE WORLD

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tvi my sister-in-law, with the ways of the world, and sowed I would never again go to the outer apart

ments, not if I were to die for it.

For two whole days I did not stir out. Then, for the first time, I discovered how far I had travelled My life felt utterly tasteless. Whatever I touched I wanted to thrust away. I felt myself waiting,from the crown of my head to the tips of my toes,-

waiting for something, somebody; my blood kep

tingling with some expectation.

I tried bussing myself with extra work. The bedroom floor was clean enough, but I insisted on its being scrubbed over again under my eyes Things were arranged in the cabinets in one kind of order: I pulled them all out and rearranged them in a different way I found no time that afternoon even to do up my hair; I hurriedly tied it into a loose knot, and went and worried everybody, fusting about the store-room. The stores seemed short, and pilfering must have been going on of late, but I could not muster up the courage to take any particular person to task,-for might not the thought

have crossed somebody's mind, 'Where were your eyes all these days? In short, I behaved that day as one possessed. The next day I tried to do some reading. What I read I have no idea, but after a spell of absentmindedness I found I had wandered away, book in hand, along the passage leading towards the outer

apartments, and was standing by a window looking

out upon the verandah running along the row of rooms on the opposite side of the quadrangle. One of these rooms, I felt, had crossed over to another shore, and the ferry had ceased to ply I felt like the ghost of myself of two days ago, doomed to remain where I was, and yet not really there, blankly looking out for ever

As I stood there, I saw Sandip come out of his room into the verandah, a newspaper in his hand. I could see that he looked extraordinarily disturbed. The courtyard, the railings, in front, seemed to rouse his wrath. He flung away his newspaper with a gesture which seemed to want to rend the space before him.

I felt I could no longer keep my vow. I was about to move on towards the sitting-room, when I found my sister-in-law behind me. 'O Lord, this beats everything' she cjaculated, as she glided away. I could not proceed to the outer apartments.

The next morning when my maid came calling.

'Rani Mother, it is getting late for giving out the stores,' I flung the keys to her, saying, 'Tell Harimati to see to it,' and went on with some embroidery of English pattern on which I was engaged, seated near the window.

Then came a servant with a letter. 'From Sandip Babu,' said he. What unbounded boldness!
What must the messenger have thought? There was a tremor within my breast as I opened the

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envelope. There was no address on the letter, only the words: An urgent matter -touching the Court. Sandap.

I flung aside the embronders. I was up on my feet in a moment, giving a touch or two to my hair by the mirror I kept the san I had on, changing only my jacket, for one of my jackets had its associations.

ciations.

I had to pass through one of the verandals, where my sister-in-law used to sit m the morning slicing betel-nut. I refused to feel awkward. 'Whither away, Chota Rane's she cried.

'In the sitting-room outside.'

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'So early! A matinée, ch'

And, as I passed on without further reply, she hummed after me a flippant song

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When I was about to enter the sitting-room, I saw Sandip immersed in an illustrated entalogue of British Academy pictures, with his back to the door. He has a great notion of himself as an expert in matters of Art.

matters of Art.

One day my husband said to him. If the artists
ever want a teacher, they need never lack for one
so long as you are there.' It had not been my husband's habit to speak cuttingly, but latterly there
has been a change and he never spares Sandip.

'What makes you suppose that artists need no

teachers?' Sandip retorted.

IV

'Art is a creation,' my husband replied 'So we should humbly be content to receive our lessons about Art from the work of the artist'

Sandip laughed at this modesty, saying: 'You think that meckness is a kin of capital which increases your wealth the more you use it. It is my conviction that those who lack pride only float about the contract of the contr

like the water reeds which have no roots in the soil?

My mind used to be full of contradictions when

they talked thus On the one hand I was eager that my husband should win in argument and that Sandip's pride should be shamed Yet, on the other, it was Sandip's unabashed pride which attracted me so It shone like a precious diamond, which knows no diffidence, and sparkles in the face of the sun itself.

I entered the room. I knew Sandip could hear my footsteps as I went forward, but he pretended

not to, and kept his eyes on the book

I dreaded his Art talks, for I could not overcome

A decaded his Art talks, for I could not overcome my delicacy about the pietures he talked of, and the things he said, and had much ado in putting on an air of overdone insensibility to hide my qualms. So, I was almost on the point of retracting my steps, when, with a deep sigh, Sandup raised his eyes, and affected to be startled at the sight of me 'Ah, you have comet'he said.

In his words, in his tone, in his eyes, there was a world of suppressed reproach, as if the claims he had acquired over me made my absence, even for

this attitude was an insult to me, but, alas, I ha not the power to resent it. I made no teply, but though I was looking at

other way, I could not help feeling that Sandip plaintive gaze had planted itself right on my fact and would take no denial. I did so wish he would

say something, so that I could shelter myself behind his words. I cannot tell how long this went on, but

at last I could stand it no longer . What is this matter,' I asked, ' you are wanting to tell me about?'

Sandip again affected surprise as he said: 'Must there always be some matter? Is friendship by itself a crime? Oh, Queen Bee, to think that you should make so light of the greatest thing on earth! Is the heart's worship to be shut out like a stray cur?" There was again that tremor within me. I could feel the crisis coming, too importunate to be put off. lov and fear struggled for the mastery. Would my thoulders. I wondered, be broad enough to stand its shock, or would it not leave me overthrown, with

I was trembling all over Steadving myself with un effort I repeated. 'You summoned me for something touching the Cause, so I have left my house-

my face in the dust?

these two or three days, a grievous wrong. I kno

Geography of a country is not the whole truth. No one can give up his hie for a map! When I see you before me, then only do I realise how lovely my country is. When you have amounted me with your own hands, then shall I know I have the sanction of my country; and if, with that in my heart, I fall fighting, it shall not be on the dust of some mapmade land, but on a lovingh spread shirt—do you know what kind of shirt?—like that of the earthen-red arij you wore the other day, with a broad blood-

red tari you wore the other dax, with a broad bloodred border. Can I ever forget it? Such are the visions which give vigour to hle, and yo, to death!? Sandip's eyes took fire as he went on, but whether it was the fire of worship, or of passion, I could not tell. I was reminded of the day on which I first heard him speak, when I could not be sure whether he was a person, or just a living flame. I had not the power to utter a word. You cannot take shelter belind the walls of decorum when

in a moment the fire leaps up and, with the flash of its sword and the roar of its laughter, destroys all the miser's stores. I was in terror lest he should forget himself and take me by the hand. For he shook like a quivering tongue of fire, his eyes showered scorching sparks on me.

'Are you for ever determined,' he cried after a

'Are you for ever determined,' he cried after a pause, 'to make gods of your petty household duties,—you who have it in you to send us to life or to death? Is this power of yours to be kept veiled in a zenana? Cast away all false shame, I

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pray you; snap your fingers at the whispering around. Take your plunge to-day into the freedom of the outer world."

When, in Sandip's appeals, his worship of the country gets to be subtly interwoven with his wership of me, then does my blood dance, indeed, and the barriers of my hesitation totter His talks about Art and Sex, his distinctions between Real and Unreal, had but clogged my attempts at response with some revolting nastiness. This, however, now burst again into a glow before which my repugnance ful-

ed away I felt that my resplendent womanhood made me indeed a goddess. Why should not its glory flash from my forchead with visible brilliance? Why does not my your find a word, some audible ery, which would be like a sacred spell to my country for its fire initiation?

All of a sudden my maid Khema rushed into the room, dishevelled. Give me my wages and let me eo, the screamed . Never in all my life have ! The rest of her speech was drowned been so in inte . What is the maner?"

Thako, the Bara Ram's mant, it appeared, had fer no theme or reason resiled her in unmeasured She was to such a state, it was no minner of me trans to parify fer by saving I would look into the matter afterward. The force of its meetic life that ler beneath the

Land Link of animant and com-

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Rather than-allow Sandip a prolonged vision of it, I had to horry back within the second

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My sister-in-law was absorbed in her betel-inuts, the suspicion of a smile plaving about her hps, as if nothing untoward had happened. She was still humming the same using

Why has your Thako been calling poor Khema names? I burst out

'Indeed' The wretch' I will have her broomed out of the louse. What a shame to spoil your morning out like this! As for Khema, where are the husty' smanners to go and disturb you when you are engaged? Anyhow, Chota Rani, don't you worry yourself with these domestic squabbles. Leave them to me, and return to your friend.'

How suddenly the wind in the sails of our mind veers round! This going to meet Sandip outside seemed, in the light of the zenana code, such an extraordinarily out-of-the-way thing to do that I went off to my own room, at a loss for a reply I knew this was my sister-in-law's doing and that she had egged her maid on to contrive this scene. But I had brought myself to such an unstable poise that I dared not have my fling.

Why, it was only the other day that I found I could not keep up to the last the unbending hauteur with which I had demanded from my husband the dismitsal of the man Nanku I felt suddenly abash-

ed when the Bara Bara came up and sall, this really all the facility the fleet fleet. We are elifate and fall and fall that open the the wasted with Smith Balance of each of the grand of the max Unknown that our Chous Rann would take this as an involt. I thought as would be the other was about the incontrolled influent?

was about! Just the incorrected utlinear!

The thing which seems so of mean when second from the heights of the country's cause, looks to muchly when seen from the bottom. One begins by getting angre, and their feels discusted.

I shut invest into my room, using by the window, thinking how care the would be if only one rould keep in harmons with one's surrounding-How timply the ernor. Ram ust in her verandah with her betel-inits and how inaccessible to me has become my natural east beside my tails duiled. Where will it all end, I aiked invise!? Shall I ever recover, as from a debrium, and forget it all; or and I to be dragged to depths from which there can be no escape in this high? How on earth did I manage to let my good fortune escape me, and spoil my life so? Every wall of this bedroom of mine, which I first entered time years ago as a bride, stares at me in dismay.

When my husband came home, after his M.A. examination, he brought for me this orchid belonging to some far-away land beyond the seas. From

BIMALA'S STORY rom some overturned urn of Beauty. We decided. ogether, to hang it here, over this window

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lowered only that once, but we have always been n hope of its doing so once more Curiously nough I have kept on watering it these days, from

orce of habit, and it is still green It is now four years since I framed a photograph of my husband in ivory and put it in the niche over

here. If I happen to look that way I have to lower ny eyes. Up to last week I used regularly to put

here the flowers of my worship, every morning after ny bath. My husband has often chided me over his. 'It shames me to see you place me on a height to which I do not belong,' he said one day

'What nonsense!' 'I am not only ashamed, but also jealous!'

'Just hear him! Jealous of whom, pray?'

'Of that false me. It only shows that I am too petty for you, that you want some extraordinary

man who can overpower you with his superiority, and so you needs must take refuge in making for ourself another " me."

'This kind of talk only makes me angry,' said I.

'What is the use of being angry with me?' he eplied. 'Blame your fate which allowed you no

hoice, but made you take me blindfold. This eeps you trying to retrieve its blunder by making

ne out a paragon.' I felt so hurt at the bare idea that tears started

ed when the Bara Rani came up and said: 'I really all my fault, brother dear. We are a fashioned folk, and I did not quite like the ways your Sandip Babu, so I only told the guard....I how was I to know that our Chota Rani would be this as an insult?—I thought it would be the ot way about! Just my incorrigible silliness!

The thing which seems so glorious when view from the heights of the country's cause, looks muddy when seen from the bottom. One begins getting angry, and then feels disgusted I shut myself into my room, sitting by the wi

dow, thinking how easy life would be if only o could keep in harmony with one's surrounding thow simply the sentor Ram sits in her verandivith her betel-nuts and how inaccessible to me hoecome my natural seat bestde my daily dutie Where will it all end, I asked myself? Shall I evecover, as from a dehrium, and forget it all; or at to be dragged to depths from which there can be oceaspe in this life? How on earth did I manage to let my good fortune escape me, and spoil my life? Every wall of this bedroom of mine, which first entered nine years ago as a bride, stares at m

n dismay.

When my husband came home, after his M.A szamination, he brought for me this orchid belonging to some far-away land beyond the seas. From beneath these few little leaves sprang such a cascade of blossoms, it looked as i

ced millions of beasts for millions of years to chieve that desire. That terrible word 'I want' as taken flesh in woman, and therefore men, who re cowards, try with all their might to keep back his primeval flood with their earthen dykes They re afraid lest, laughing and dancing as it goes, it hould wash away all the hedges and props of their umpkin field. Men, in every age, flatter themelves that they have seeured this force within the ounds of their convenience, but it gathers and rows. Now it is calm and deep like a lake, out gradually its pressure will increase, the dykes vill give way, and the force which has so long een dumb will rush forward with the roar: 'I vant! These words of Sandip echo in my heart-beats

the a war-drum. They shame into silence all my onflicts with myself. What do I care what people any think of me? Of what value are that orchid and that niche in my bedroom? What power have hey to belittle me, to put me to shame? The primal fire of creation burns in me.

I felt a strong desire to snatch down the orchid affing it out of the window, to denude the niche (its picture, to lay bare and naked the unashamed part of destruction that raged within me. My arm as raised to do it, but a sudden pang passed hough my breast, tears started to my eyes. I have myself down and sobbed: 'What is the end fall this, what is the end of all this, what is the end

to my eyes that day. And whenever I think of he

now, I cannot raise my eyes to the niche.

For now there is another photograph in my,
case The other day, when arranging the simp
room, I brought away that double photogram, i
one in which Sandip's portrait was next to my laband's To this portrait I have no flowers of we
ship to offer, but it remains hidden away under
germs. It has all the greater fiscination brais
kept secret I look at it now and then with der
closed. At night I turn up the lamp, and itself
it in my hand, gazing and gazing. And every my
I think of burning it in the flame of the lamp, if
done with it for ever; but every night I haves
and smother it again in my pears and diamed

Ah, wretched woman! What a wealth of was twined round each one of those jewels! I why am I not dead?

Sandip had impressed it on me that hesitable not in the nature of woman. For her, neil right nor left has any eviteuce,—she only more forward. When the women of our country will up, he repeatedly insisted, their voice will unmistakably confident in its utterance of the land of the work.

I want! Sandip went on one day, this was primal word at the root of all creation. It had maxim to guide it, but it became fire and wrow itself into sunt and stars. Its partiality is teri Because it had a desire for man, it ruithlessly sa īv

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earth was even. The volcano butted it with its fiery horn and found its own eminence,-its justice was not towards its obstacle, but towards itself. Successful injustice and genuine cruelty have been the only forces by which individual or nation has become millionaire or monarch That is why I preach the great discipline of In-

justice. I say to every one. Deliverance is based upon injustice. Injustice is the fire which must keep on burning something in order to save itself from becoming ashes Whenever an individual or nation becomes incapable of perpetrating injustice it is swept into the dust-bin of the world. As yet this is only my idea, -it is not completely myself. There are rifts in the armour through

which something peeps out which is extremely soft and sensitive Because, as I say, the best part of myself was created before I came to this stage of existence From time to time I try my followers in their les-

son of cruelty. One day we went on a picnic. A goat was grazing by I asked them: 'Who is there among you that can cut off a leg of that goat, alive. with this knife, and bring it to me?" While they all hesitated, I went myself and did it. One of them fainted at the sight But when they saw me unmoved they took the dust of my feet, saying that I was above all human weaknesses. That is to say, v that day the vaporous envelope which was

THE HOSE AND THE WORLD

*ASSECTIONY

en I trad these pages of the story of my sully question myself: Is this Sandip? As of words? Am I merely a book with a co-

of words? Am I merely a book with a cor flesh and blood? earth is not a dead thing like the moon.

earth is not a dead thing like the moon. She is. Her rivers and oceans send up sapour thishe is clothed. She is covered with a manter own duit which thes about the air. The tr, gazing upon the earth from the outside.

er, garing upon the earth from the outside, only the light reflected from this vapour and it. The tracks of the mights continents are incity visible.

man, who is allied as this earth is, is likewise enveloped in the miss of the ideas which he

enveloped in the mast of the locas which he hing out. His real land and water remain and he appears to be made of only lights dows.

dows. ms to me, in this story of my life, that, like a anet, I am displaying the picture of an ideal But I am not merely what I want, what I

I am also what I do not love, what I do
to be. My creation had begun before I
had no choice in regard to my surand so must make the best of such
as comes to my hand.

as comes to my hand.

cory of life makes me certain that the Great

To be just is for ordinary men,—it is re-

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'That I cannot help,' Nikhil replied. 'A machine is distinct enough, but not so life. If to gain distinctness you try to know life as a machine, then

chine is distinct enough, but not so lite. It to gain distinctness you try to know hie as a machine, then such mere distinctness cannot stand for truth. The soul is not as distinct as success, and so you only lose your soul if you seek it in your success."

'Where, then, is this wonderful soul?'

'Where it knows itself in the infinite and transcends its success'

'But how does all this apply to our work for the country?'

'It is the same thing Where our country makes itself the final object, it gains success at the cost of the soul. Where it recognises the Greatest as greater than all, there it may miss success, but gains its soul'

'Is there any example of this in history?'

'Man is so great that he can despise not only the success, but also the example Possibly example is lacking, just as there is no example of the flower in the seed. But there is the urgence of the flower in the seed all the same'

It is not that I do not at all understand Nikhil's point of view; that is rather where my danger lies. I was born in India and the poson of its spirituality runs in my blood However loudly I may proclaim the madness of walking in the path of self-abuegation, I cannot avoid it altogether.

This is exactly how such curious anomalies happen nowadays in our country. We must have our my idea, but failed to perceive the inner me, which by a curious freak of fate has been created tender and merciful.

In the present chapter of my life, which is growing in interest every day round Bimala and Nikhi there is also much that remains hidden underneal! This malady of ideas which afflicts me is shapin my life within: nevertheless a great part of my life remains outside its influence, and so there is set a discrepancy between my outward life and its in

ner design which I try my best to keep concealed even from myself, otherwise it may wreck not only my plans, but my very life. Life is indefinite,—a bundle of contradictions

Life is indefinite,—a bundle of contradictions men, with our ideas, strive to give it a particular shape by melting it into a particular mould,—intended the definiteness of success. All the world-conquer

ors, from Alexander down to the American millionaires, mould themselves into a sword or a mint, and thus find that distinct image of themselves which is the source of their success.

The cluef controversy between Nikhil and mysell arises from this, that though I say 'know thyself,' and Nikhil also says 'know thyself,' his interpretation makes this 'knowing' tantamount to 'not knowing.'

"All Winnies was bind of success.' Nikhil once ob-

Winning your kind of success,' Nikhil once objected, 'is success gained at the cost of the soul: but the soul is greater than success.'

I simply said in answer:

But what is teasing me is that I am getting entangled. Am I not born to rule?-to bestride my proper steed, the crowd, and drive it as I will; the reins in my hand, the destination known only to me, and for it the thorns, the mire, on the road? This steed now awaits me at the door, pawing and champing its bit, its neighing filling the skies. But where am I, and what am I about, letting day after day of golden opportunity slip by? I used to think I was like a storm, -that the torn flowers with which I strewed my path would not impede my progress. But I am only wandering round and round a flower like a bee,-not a storm.

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So, as I was saving, the colouring of ideas which man gives himself is only superficial. The inner man remains as ordinary as ever If some one, who could see right into me, were to write my biography, he would make me out to be no different from that lout of a Panchu, or even from Niklul! Last night I was turning over the pages of my old diary. . I had just graduated, and my brain was bursting with plulosophy Even so early I had

yourd not to harbour any illusions, whether of my own or others' imagining, but to build my life on a solid basis of reality. But what has since been its actual story? Where is its solidity? It has rather been a network, where, though the thread be continuous, more space is taken up by the holes. Fight as I may, these will not own defeat. Just as I was congratulating myself on steadily following the religion and also our nationalism; our Bhagare and also our Bande Mataram. The result is that of them suffer. It is like performing with an I lish military band, side by side with our Indian tive pipes. I must make it the purpose of my to put an end to this hideous confusion.

I want the western military style to prevail, the Indian. We shall then not be ashamed of flag of our passion, which mother Nature has a with us as our standard into the battlefield of Passion is beautiful and pure,—pure as the lily the

Passion is beautiful and pure,—pure as the lily to comes out of the slimy soil. It rises superior to defilement and needs no Pears' soap to wash it elec-

A question has been worrying me the last fo

days. Why am I allowing my life to become e tangled with Bimala's? Am I a drifting log to caught up at any and every obstacle?

Not that I have any false shame at Bimala becoming an object of my deare. It is only too cleichow the wants me, and so I look on her as qui legitimately mine. The fruit hangs on the brane by the stem, but that is no reason why the claim the stem should be eternal. Ripe fruit cannot forcer swear by its slackening stem-hold. All its sweetness has been accumulated for me; to surren

der itself to my hand is the reason of its existence its very nature, its true morality. So I must plack it, for it becomes me not to make it futile. w

that some hidden elements in my nature have openly ranged themselves as obstacles in my path.

That is exactly how Ravana, whom I look upon as the real hero of the Ramayana, met with his doom. He kept Sita in his Asoka garden, awaiting her pleasure, instead of taking her straight into his larem. This weak spot in his otherwise grand character made the whole of the abduction episode futile. Another such touch of compunction made him disregard, and be lenient to, his traitorous brother Bibhian, only to get himself falled for his pains.

Thus does the tragic in life come by its own. In the beginning it hes, a little thing, in some dark under-wall, and ends by overthrowing the whole superstructure. The real traged is, that man does not know himself for what he really is

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Then again there is Nikhil Crank though he be, laugh at him as I may, I cannot get rid of the idea that he is my friend. At first I gave no thought to his point of view, but of late it has begun to shame and hiurt me. Therefore I have been trying to talk and argue with him in the same enthusiastic way as of old, but it does not ring rive. It is even leading me at times into such a length of unnaturalness as to pretend to agree with him. But such hypocrisy is not in my nature, nor in that of Nikhil either. Thit, at least, is something we have in common. That is why, nowadays, I would rather not come.

thread, here I am badly caught in a hole! For have become susceptible to compunctions.

'I want it; it is here: let me take it.'-This is clear-cut, straightforward policy. Those who c pursue its course with vigour needs must win

through in the end. But the gods would not have it that such journey should be easy, so they have deputed the siren Sympathy to distract the wayfarer, to dim his vision with her tearful mist. I can see that poor Bimala is struggling like a snared deer. What a piteous alarm there is in her

eyes! How she is torn with straining at her bonds! This sight, of course, should gladden the heart of a

true hunter. And so do I rejoice; but, then, I am also touched; and therefore I dally, and standing on the brink I am hesitating to pull the noose fast. There have been moments, I know, when I could have bounded up to her, clasped her hands and folded her to my breast, unresisting. Had I done so, she would not have said one word. She was aware that some crisis was impending, which in a moment would change the meaning of the whole world. Standing before that cavern of the incalculable but yet expected, her face went pale and her eyes glowed with a fearful ecstasy. Within that moment, when it arrives, an eternity will take shape, which our destiny awans, holding its breath.

But I have let this moment slip by. I did not, with uncompromising strength, press the almost certain into the absolutely assured. I now see clearly that some hidden elements in my nature have openly ranged themselves as obstacles in my path. That is exactly how Ravana, whom I look upon as the real hero of the Ramayana, met with his doom.

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across him, and have taken to fighting shy of h presence

All these are signs of weakness. No sooner is the possibility of a wrong admitted than it becomes a tual, and clutches you by the throat, however yo may then try to shake off all belief in it. What should like to be able to tell Nikhil frankly is, tha happenings such as these must be looked in the faceas great Realities-and that which is the Truti

should not be allowed to stand between true friends There is no denying that I have really weakened It was not this weakness which won over Bimala the burnt her wings in the blaze of the full strength of my unhesitating manliness. Whenever smoke obscures its lustre she also becomes confused, and

fraws back. Then comes a thorough revulsion of eeling, and she fain would take back the garland he has put round my neck, but cannot, and so she only closes her eyes, to shut it out of sight. But all the same I must not swerve from the path have chalked out. It would never do to abandon he cause of the country, especially at the present ime I shall simply make Bimala one with my ountry. The turbulent west wind which has swept

without shame, without her even being aware of it. Fascinated by the heauty of this terrible wrecking power, she will not hesitate a moment to be cruel. I have seen in Bimala's nature the cruelty which is the inherent force of existence,—the cruelty which with its unrelenting might keeps the world hearts.

SANDIPS STORY

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beautiful.

If only women could be set free from the artificial fetters put round them by men, we could see on earth, the living image of Kali, the shameless, pittless goddess. I am a worshipper of Kali, and one

less godiess. I am a worshipper of Kan, and one day I shall truly worship her, setting Bimala on her altar of Destruction For this let me get ready.

The way of retreat is absolutely closed for both of us. We shall despoil each other; get to hate each other; but now more here.

us. We shall despoil each other: get to hate each other: but never more be free.

cross him, and have taken to fighting shy of his

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All these are signs of weakness. No sooner is the
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as the cradle to my power, as well as to my love.

SANDIPS STORY Bimala will see such a majestic vision of deliverance, that her bonds will slip from about her, without shame, without her even being aware of it,

Fascinated by the beauty of this terrible wrecking power, she will not hesitate a moment to be cruel, I have seen in Bimala's nature the cruelty which is the inherent force of existence,-the cruelty which with its unrelenting might keeps the world

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fetters put round them by men, we could see on earth the living image of Kali, the shameless, piti-

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as great Realities-and that which is the Truth should not be allowed to stand between true friends. There is no denying that I have really weakened. It was not this weakness which won over Bimali;

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CHAPTER V

NIKIUL'S STORY

w EVERYTHING is rippling and waving with the flood

of August. The young shoots of rice have the sheen of an infant's limbs. The water has invaded the garden next to our house. The morning light, like love of the blue sky, is lavished upon the earth....

Why cannot I sing? The water of the distant river is shimmering with light, the leaves are glistening; the rice-fields, with their fitful shivers, break into gleams of gold; and in this symphony of Autumn, only I remain voiceless The sunshine of the world

strikes my heart, but is not reflected back. When I realise the lack of expressiveness in m)self, I know why I am deprived. Who could bear my company day and night without a break?

Bimala is full of the energy of life, and so she has never become stale to me for a moment, in all these nine years of our wedded life. My life has only its dumb depths, but no mur-

muring rush | I can only receive . not impart movement. And therefore my company is like fasting I recognise clearly to-day that Bimala has been languishing because of a famine of companionship

Then whom shall I blame? Lake Vidyapathi I

can only lament: August, the sky breaks into a posicious rain. Also, employ to my became

My house, I now see, was built to remain empty, because its doors cannot open. But I never knew till now that its divinity had been sitting outside I had fondly believed that she had accepted my sacrifice, and granted in return her boon. But, alas, my house has all along been empty.

Every year, about this time, it was our practice to go in a house-boat over the broads of Samalda, I used to tell Bimala that a song must come back to its refrain over and over again The original refrain . -

wind

green

keeps its ear close to the speaking water There, at the beginning of time, a man and a woman first met.-not within walls. And therefore we two must come back to Nature, at least once a year, to tune our love anew to the first pure note of the meeting of hearts.

The first two anniversaries of our married life I spent in Calcutta, where I went through my examinations. But from the next year onwards, for seven years without a break, we have celebrated our union among the blossoming water-lilies. Now begins the next octave of my life. It was difficult for me to ignore the fact that the

same month of August had come round again this year. Does Bimala remember it, I wonder?-she has given me no reminder. Everything is mute about me

CHAPTER V

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EVERYTHING IS rippling and waving with the floof August. The young shoots of rice have the sh of an infant's limbs The water has invaded garden next to our house The morning light, love of the blue sky, is lawished upon the earth. Why cannot I sing? The water of the distant ries thimmering with light; the feaves are glistenithe rice-fields, with their fitful shivers, break is

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It is August, the sky breaks anto a passionate rain, Alas, empty is my house My house, I now see, was built to remain empty, because its doors cannot open. But I never knew till now that its divinity had been situng outside. I had fondly believed that she had accepted my sacrifice, and granted in return her boon But, alsa, my house has all along been empty.

Every year, about this time, it was our practice to go in a house-boat over the broads of Samalda. I used to tell Bimala that a song must come back to its refrain over and over again. The original refrain for every song is in Nature, where the rain-laden wind passes over the rippling stream, where the green earth, drawing its shadow-vell over its face, keeps its ear close to the speaking water. There, at the beginning of time, a man and a woman first met,—not within walls. And therefore we two must come back to Nature, at least once a year, to tune our love anew to the first pure note of the meeting of hearts.

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CHAPTER V

NIKIHL'S STORY

IV

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The symphony of Autumn, only I remain voiceless. The symphony of Autumn, only I remain voiceless.

When I realise the lack of expressiveness in my-

self, I know why I am deprived. Who could bear my company day and night without a break? Bimala is full of the energy of life, and so she has never become stale to me for a moment, in all these

nine years of our wedded life.

My life has only its dumb depths; but no murmuring rush. I can only receive not impart motement. And therefore my company is like fasting.

I recognise clearly to-day that Bimala has been languishing because of a famine of companionship.

Then whom shall I blame? Like Vidyapathi I can only lament:

It is August, the sky breaks into a passionate rain, Alas, empty is my house

never wear your shoes! This bedroom of mine,-it has a subtle atmosphere which goes straight to my heart. I was never aware, as I am to-day, how my thirsting heart has been sending out its roots to cling round each and every familiar object. The severing of the main root, I see, is not enough to set life free Even these

she was ready to drop for very shame, to go in them even from the room to the verandah Since then she has worn out many shoes, but has treasured up this pair. When first showing her the slippers, I chaffed her over a curious practice of hers; 'I have caught you taking the dust of my feet, thinking me asleep! These are the offerings of my worship to ward the dust off the feet of my wakeful divinity' 'You must not say such things,' she protested, ' or I will

little slippers serve to hold one back My wandering eyes fall on the niche. My portrait there is looking the same as ever, in spite of the flowers scattered round it having been withered black! Of all the things in the room their greeting strikes me as sincere. They are still here simply because it was not felt worth while even to remove them. Never mind; let me welcome truth, albeit in such sere and sorry garb, and look forward to the

time when I shall be able to do so unmoved, as does my photograph. As I stood there. Bimal came in from behind,

I hastily turned my eyes from the niche to the shel-

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It is August, the sky breaks into a passionate rain, And empty is my house

The house which becomes empty through the parting of lovers, still has music left in the heart of its emptiness. But the house that is empty because hearts are asunder, is awful in its slience. Even the

This cry of pain must be silenced in me. So long as I continue to suffer, Bimala will never have true freedom I must free her completely, otherwise I shall never gain my freedom from untruth.....

I think I have come to the verge of understanding

cry of pain is out of place there

gold-embroidered slippers.

one thing. Man has so fanned the flame of the loves of men and women, as to make it overpass its rightful domain, and now, even in the name of humanity itself, he cannot bring it back under control. Man's worship has idolised his passion. But there must be no more human sacrifices at its shrine.

I went into my bedroom this morning, to fetch a book. It is long since I have been there in the day-time. A pang passed through me as I looked

round it to-day, in the morning light. On the clothes rack was hanging a sort of Bimala's, crinkled ready for wear. On the dressing-table were her perfumes, her comb, her hair-pins, and with them, still, her venilion box! Underneath were her tiny

Once, in the old days, when Bimala had not yet overcome her objections to shoes, I had got these

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out from Lucknow, to tempt her. The fer she was ready to drop for very shame, to grant to the read to

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Once, in the old days, when Bimala had not yet overcome her objections to shoes, I had got these

ened my heart. There are more things in life than the union or separation of man and woman The great world stretches far beyond, and one can truly measure one's own joys and sorrows when standing in its midst.

Panchu was devoted to my master I know well enough how he manages to eke out a hyelihood

NIKHIL'S STORY

good that day. But these words of Panchu light-

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enough how he manages to eke out a livelihood He is up before dawn every day, and with a basket of pan leaves, twists of tobacco, coloured cotton yarn, little combs, looking-glasses, and other trinkets beloved of the village women, he wades through the knee-deep water of the marsh and goes over to the Namasudra quarters There he barters his goods for rice, which fetches him a little more than their price in money. If he can get back soon enough he goes out again, after a hurried meal, to the sweetmeat seller's, where he assists in beating sugar for wafers. As soon as he comes home he sits at his shell-bangle making, plodding on often till midnight All this cruel toil does not earn, for lumself and his family, a bare two meals a day during much more than half the year. His method of eating is to begin with a good filling draught of water, and his staple food is the cheapest kind of seedy banana. And yet the family has to go with only one meal a day for the rest of the year.

At one time I had an idea of making him a charity allowance, 'But,' said my master, 'your gift may

ves as I muttered: 'I came to get Amiel's Journal.' What need had I to volunteer an explanation? I felt like a wrong-doer, a trespasser, prying into a secret not meant for me I could not look Bimal in the face, but hurried away.

I had just made the discovery that it was useless

to keep up a pretence of reading in my room outside, and also that it was equally beyond me to busy myself attending to anything at all,—so that all the days of my future bid fair to congeal into one solid mass and settle heavily on my breast for good,when Panchu, the tenant of a neighbouring zamindar, came up to me with a basketful of cocoa-nuts and greeted me with a profound obeisance, 'Well, Panchu,' said I. 'What is all this for?' I had got to know Panchu through my master. He was extremely poor, nor was I in a position to

do anything for him; so I supposed this present was intended to procure a tip to help the poor fellow to make both ends meet. I took some money from my purse and held it out towards him, but with folded hands he protested: 'I cannot take that, ir! 'Why, what is the matter?' 'Let me make a clean breast of it, sir. Once,

when I was hard pressed, I stole some cocoa-nuts rom the garden here. I am getting old, and may lie any day, so I have come to pay them back.'



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I had just made the discovery that it was useless to keen up a pretence of reading in my room out-

to keep up a pretence of reading in my room outside, and also that it was equally beyond me to busy myself attending to any thing at all,—so that all the days of my future buf far to congeal into one solid mass and settle heavily on my breast for good,—when Panchu, the tenant of a neighbouring zambadar, cance up to me with a baskeful of coccanuts and greeted me with a profound obeisance.

and greeted me with a profound obeisance.

Well, Paneliu, and I 'What is all dis for?'
I had got to know Panehu through my master.
He was extremely poor, nor was I in a position to
do anything for him; so I supposed this present was
intended to procure a tip to help the poor fellow to
make both ends meet I took some money from
my purse and held it out towards him, but with
folded hands he protested: 'I cannot take that,

sir!

'Why, what is the matter?'

'Let me make a clean breast of it, vir. Once, when I was hard pressed, I stole some cocoa-nuts from the garden here. I am getting old, and may

die any day, so I have come to pay them back."

corner to make room for Bimala,—taken up as I was with decorating her and dressing her and educating her and moving round her day and night; forgetting how great is humanity and how nobly precious is man's life. When the actualities of everyday things get the better of the man, then is Truth lost sight of and freedom missed. So painfully important did Bimala make the mere actualities, that the truth remained concealed from me. That is why I find no gap in my misery, and spread this minute point of my empuness over all the world. And so, for hours on this Autumn morning, the re-

It is the month of August, and the sky breaks into a passionate rain. Alas, my house is empty

BIMALA'S STORY

frain has been humming in my ears.

XI

The change which had, in a moment, come over the mind of Bengal was tremendous It was as if the Ganges had touched the ashes of the sixty thousand sons of Sagart which no fire could enkindle, no other was the sad again into living clay. The ashes of littless Bengal suddenly spoke up 'Here am It.'

I have read somewhere that in ancient Greece a sculptor had the good fortune to impart life to the image made by his own hand. Even in that mira-

⁴ The condition of the curse which had reduced them to asher was such that they could only be restored to life if the stream of the Ganges was brought down to them.—Tr.

destroy the man, it cannot destroy the hardship of his lot. Mother Bengal has not only this one Pachu. If the milk in her breasts has run dry, the cannot be supplied from the outside.

ctt

These are thoughts which give one pause, and decided to devote invelf to working it out. The very day I said to Birnal. Let us dedicate our by to removing the root of this sorrow in our country.

to removing the root of this sorrow in our country. You are my Prince Siddharta, I I see, she replie with a smile. But do not let the torrent of you feelings end by sweeping me away also!

Siddharta took his vows alone. I want out to be a joint arrangement.

The idea passed away in talk. The fact in Binnala is at heart what is called a 'ladv.' Thougher own people are not well off, she was born! Ranl. She has no doubts in her mind that there a lower unit of measure for the trails and troubles of the 'lower classes.' Want is, of course, a permanent feature of their lives, but does not necessaril.

teets them, as the hanks protect the pool; by widering bounds only the slime is exposed.

The real fact is that Bimala has only come into my home, not into my life. I had magnified he so, leaving her such a large place, that when I lost her, my whole way of life became narrow and con-

mean 'want' to them Their very smallness pro

fined. I had thrust aside all other objects into a

'The name by which Buddha was known when a Prince, before

comer to make room for Bimala,—taken up as I was with decorating her and dressing her and educating her and moving round her day and right; forgetting how great is humanity and how nobly precious is man's life. When the actualities of everyday things get the better of the man, then is Truth lost sight of and freedom missed. So painfully important did Bimala make the mere actualities, that the truth remained concealed from me. That is why I find no gap in my misery, and spread this minute point of my emptiness over all the world. And so, for hours on this Autumn morning, the refatal has been humming in my ears:

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BINALA'S STORY

ΚI

The change which had, in a moment, come over the mind of Bengal was tremendous. It was as if the Ganges had touched the ashes of the sity thousand sons of Sagar' which no fire could enkindle, no other water knead again into living clas The ashes of lifeless Rengal suddents spoke up 'Here am I.'

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The condition of the curve which had reduced them to adver was such that they could only be restored to life if the stream of the Ganges was brought down to them .—Tr

cle, however, there was the process of form preceding life. But where was the unity in this heap of
barren ashes? Had they been hard like stone, we
might have had hopes of some form emerging, even
as Ahalya, though turned to stone, at last won back
her humanity. But these scattered ashes must have
dropped to the dust through gaps in the Creator's
fingers, to be blown hither and thither by the wind.
They had become heaped up, but were never before
united Yet in this day which had come to Bengal, even this collection of looseness had taken
shape, and proclaimed in a thundering voice, at our
very door. 'Here' I am'

How could we help thinking that it was all supernatural? This moment of our history seemed to have dropped into our hand like a jewel from the crown of some drunken god. It had no resemblanee to our past; and so we were led to hope that all our wants and miseries would disappear by the spell of some magic charm, that for us there was no longer any boundary line between the possible and the impossible. Everything seemed to be saying to us: 'It is coming! it has come!'

Thus we came to cherish the belief that our history needed no steed, but that like heaven's chariot would move with its own inherent power.—At

no wages would have to be paid to the chario-', his wine cup would have to be filled again And then in some impossible paradise

our hopes would be reached.

My husband was not altogether unmoved, but hrough all our excitement it was the strain of sadness in him which deepened and deepened. He seemed to have a vision of something beyond the surging present.

I remember one day, in the course of the arguments he continually had with Sandip, he said: Good fortune comes to our gate and announces itself, only to prove that we have not the power to receive it,-that we have not kept things ready to be able to invite it into our house'

'No,' was Sandip's answer 'You talk like an atheist because you do not believe in our gods To us it has been made quite visible that the Goddess has come with her boon, yet you distrust the obvi-

ous signs of her presence."

'It is because I strongly believe in my God,' said my husband, ' that I feel so eertain that our preparations for his worship are lacking. God has power to give the boon, but we must have power to accept it."

This kind of talk from my husband would only annoy me. I could not keep from joining in: ' You think this excitement is only a fire of drunkenness, but does not drunkenness, up to a point, give strength?"

'Yes,' my husband replied. 'It may give strength, but not weapons."

'But strength is the gift of God,' I went on. Weapons can be supplied by mere mechanics.

THE HOME AND THE WORLD ele, however, there was the process of form preceding life But where was the unity in this heap of

cit.

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least no wages would have to be paid to the charioteer; only his wine cup would have to be filled again and again. And then in some impossible paradise the goal of our hopes would be reached.

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My husband smiled. "The mechanics will claim their wages before they deliver their supplies," he said.

Sandip swelled his chest as he retorted: 'Don't you trouble about that. Their wages shall be

paid.

I shall bespeak the festive music when the payment has been made, not before, my husband ans-

wered
You needn't imagine that we are depending on your bounty for the music, said Sandip scomfully.

Your bounty for the music,' said Sandip scorns

Our festival is above all money payments.'

And in his thick voice he began to sing:

Plays upon the supple pope, bought for methods.

Drawing my hears away.

Then with a simile he turned to me and said: 'If

I sing, Queen Bee, it is only to prove that when music comes into one's life, the lack of a good voice is no matter. When we sing therely on the strength of our tunefulness, the song is belittled. Now that a full flood of music has swept over our country, let Nikhil practise his scales, while we rouse the land with our cracked voices:

> My house erre to me. Why go out to lose your all? My his 1391. All that you have, flurg to the wind!! If we must lose our all, let us lose are what it it worth after all? If I must court num, let use do it sunfanyl; For my quest as the death-daught of immortativ.

If I must count run, betwee do it unshroph;
For my quest in the death-draught of immortative.

'The truth is, Nikhil, that we have all lost our hearts. None can hold us any longer within the

bounds of the easily possible, in our forward rush to the hopelessly impossible.

'Those who would draw us back
They know not the fearful yoy of recklessness
They know not that we have had our call
From the end of the crooked path
All that u good and straight and trum,—
Let it torole over in the dust '

I thought that my husband was going to continue the discussion, but he rose silently from his seat and left us.

The thing that was agitating me within was merely a variation of the stormy passion outside, which wept the country from one end to the other. The car of the wielder of my destiny was fast approaching, and the sound of its wheels reverberated in my being. I had a constant feeling that something extraordinary might happen any moment, for which, however, the responsibility would not be mine. Was I not removed from the plane in which right and wrong, and the feelings of others, have to be considered? Had I ever wanted this,—had I ever been waiting or hoping for any such thing? Look at my whole life and tell me then, if I was in any was accountable.

Through all my past I had been consistent in my devotion,—but when at length it came to receiving the boon, a different god appeared! And just as the awakened country, with its Bande Mataram, thrills in salutation to the unrealised future before it, so do all my veins and nerves send forth

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My life says. All that you have, ling to the winds!

If we must less our all, let us lose it what is it worth after all!

If we must lote our all, let us lose at what is it worth afte If I must court rum, let use do it smilingly For my quest is the death-draught of immortality

'The truth is, Nikhil, that we have all lost our hearts. None can hold us any longer within the

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and the hurrying on. Ah! wretched wanderer through the night, when the dawn reddens you will see no trace of a way to return. But why return? Death will serve as well. If the Dark which sounded the flute should lead to destruction, why trouble about the hereafter? When I am merged in its blackness, neither I, nor good and bad, nor laughter, nor tears, shall be any more!

XII

In Bengal the machinery of time being thus suddenly run at full pressure, things which were diffidul became eary, one following soon after another.
Nothing could be held back any more, even in our
corner of the country. In the beginning our distiet was backward, for my husband was unwilling
to put any compulsion on the villagers. 'Those
who make sacrifices for their country's sake are
indeed her servants,' he would say, 'but those who
compel others to make them in her name are her
enemies. They would cut freedom at the root, to
gain it at the top.'

But when Sandip came and settled here, and his followers began to move about the country, speaking in towns and market-places, waves of excitement came rolling up to us as well. A band of young fellows of the locality attached themselves to him, some even who had been known as a disgrace to the willage. But the glow of their genuine enthusiasm lighted them up, within as well as with-

out. It became quite clear that when the pure breezes of a great jox and hope sweep through the land, all dirt and decay are cleaned away. It is hard, indeed, for men to be frank and straight and health, when their country is in the throes of dejection.

Then were a whose estates all had not been began to feel as yet, some time.

HR. HOME AND THE WORLD

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My husband
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vessel, and wor falstioned castor watery Swadsthi we had always fashionable furnically when he European, as hi My husband 'Why allow suc say with a smile.

They will the

'If they do, I will pay them back by thinking that their refinement does not go deeper than their white skins '

My husband had an ordinary brass pot on his writing-table which he used as a flower-vase It has often happened that, when I had news of some European guest, I would steal into his room and put in its place a crystal vase of European make.

'Look here, Bimala,' he objected at length, ' that brass pot is as unconscious of itself as those blossoms are; but this thing protests its purpose so loudly, it is only fit for artificial flowers

The Bara Rani, alone, pandered to my husband's whims. Once she comes panting to say 'Oh, brother, have you heard? Such lovely Indian soaps have come out! My days of luxury are gone by, still, if

they contain no animal fat, I should like to try some.' This sort of thing makes my husband beam all over, and the house is deluged with Indian scents and soaps Soaps indeed! They are more like lumps of caustic soda. And do I not know that what my sister-in-law uses on herself are the European soaps of old, while these are made over to the maids for washing clothes?

Another time it is: 'Oh, brother dear, do get

me some of these new Indian pen-holders."

Her' brother' bubbles up as usual, and the Bara Rani's room becomes littered with all kinds of awful sticks that go by the name of Swadeshi pen-holders. Not that it makes any difference to her, for reading

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CH.

and writing are out of her line. Still, in her writingcase, lies the selfsame ivory pen-holder, the only one ever handled

The fact is, all this was intended as a hit at me, because I would not keep my husband company in his vagaries. It was no good trying to show up my sister-in-law's insincerity; my husband's face would set so hard, if I barely touched on it. One only gets into trouble, trying to save such people from being imposed upon!

The Bara Rani loves sewing. One day I could not help blurting out: 'What a humbug you are, sister! When your "brother" is present, your mouth waters at the very mention of Swadeshi scissors, but it is the English-made article every time when you work."

'What harm?' she replied 'Do you not see what pleasure it gives him? We have grown up together in this house, since he was a boy. I simply cannot bear, as you can, the sight of the smile leaving his face Poor dear, he has no amusement except this playing at shop-keeping You are his only dissipation, and you will yet be his ruin?'

'Whatever you may say, it is not right to be double-faced.' I retorted.

My sister-in-law laughed out in my face. 'Oh, wir dess little Chota Rani!-straight as a schoolrod, eh? But a woman is not built that is soft and supple, so that she may bend an...

I could not forget those words: 'You are his diss pation, and will be his rum!' To-day I feel, a man needs must have some intoxicant, let it to he a woman.

XIII

Suksar, within our estates, is one of the bigg trade centres in the district. On one side of stretch of water there is held a daily bazar; on a other, a weekly market During the rains when a piece of water gets connected with the river, i

sats can come through, great quantities of cot

e brought in for sale

At the height of our enthusiasm, Sandin lai

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own that all foreign articles, together with emon of foreign influence, must be driven of ur territory.

Of course? said 1, parding myself up t

'Of course?' said 1, girding myself up sight.
'I have had words with Nikhil about it.'

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double-faced,' I retorted. My sister-in-law laughed out in my face. 'Oh, our artless little Chota Rani!-straight as a schoolmaster's rod, eh? But a woman is not built that way. She is soft and supple, so that she may bend without being crooked.'

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I could not forget those words 'You are his dissipation, and will be his ruin!' To-day I feel,—if a man needs must have some intoxicant, let it not be a woman.

xtu

Suksar, within our estates, is one of the biggest trade centres in the district On one side of a stretch of water there is held a daily bazar, on the other, a weekly market. During the rains when this piece of water gets connected with the river, and beats can come through, great quantities of cotton yams, and woollen stuffs for the coming winter, are brought in for sale.

At the height of our enthusiasm, Sandip laid it down that all foreign articles, together with the demon of foreign influence, must be driven out of our territory.

'Of course!' said I, girding myself up for a

'I have had words with Nikhıl about it,' said Sandip. 'He tells me, he does not mind speechifying, but he will not have coercion.'

I will see to that, 'I said, with a proud sense of power. I knew how deep was my husband's love for me. Had I been in my senses I should have allowed myself to be torn to pieces rather than assert my claim to that, at such a time. But Sandip had to be impressed with the full strength of my Shakti.

Sandip had brought home to me, in his irresistible

THE HOME AND THE WORLD way, how the cosmic Energy was revealed for each individual in the shape of some special affinity. Vaishnava Philosophy, he said, speaks of the Statti of Delight that dwells in the heart of creation, ever

attracting the heart of her Eternal Lover. Men

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have a perpetual lunging to bring out this Shakii from the hidden depths of their own nature, and those of us who succeed in doing so at once clearly understand the meaning of the music coming to us from the Dark. He broke out singing: * My flate, that was long with its song, Is along now when we stand face to face. My call went wearing you from sky to sky When you lay halden.

Put now all my cer finds its smile In the face of my behavel."

Listening to his allegories, I had forgotten that I

was plain and simple Bimala. I was Shakti; also

an embodiment of Universal 10y. Nothing could fetter me, nothing was impossible for me; whatever I touched would gain new life. The world around

me was a fresh creation of mine; for behold, before my heart's response had touched it, there had not been this wealth of gold in the Autumn sky! And this hero, thus true servant of the country, this devotee of mine,-this flaming intelligence, this burning energy, this shining genius,—lum also was I creating from moment to moment. Have I not seen how my presence pours fresh life into him time after time? The other day Sandip begged me to receive a

young lad, Amulya, an ardent disciple of his. In a moment I could see a new light flash out from the boy's eyes, and knew that he, too, had a vision of Shakti manifest, that my creative force had begun its work in his blood 'What sorcery is this of

yours!' exclaimed Sandip next day. 'Amulya is a boy no longer, the wick of his life is all ablaze. Who can hide your fire under your home-roof? Every one of them must be touched up by it, sooner or later, and when every lamp is alight what a

grand carnival of a Dewalt we shall have in the country! Blinded with the brilliance of my own glory I had decided to grant my devotee this boon I was overweeningly confident that none could baulk me of

what I really wanted. When I returned to my room after my talk with Sandip, I loosed my hair and tied it up over again. Miss Gilby had taught me a way of brushing it up from the neck and piling it in a knot over my head This style was a favourite one with my husband 'It is a pity,' he once said, ' that Providence should have chosen poor me, instead of poet Kalidas, for revealing all the wonders of a woman's neck. The poet would probably

have likened it to a flower-stem; but I feel it to be a torch, holding aloft the black flame of your hair. With which he.....but why, oh why, do I go back to all that?

I sent for my husband. In the old days I could contrive a hundred

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to get him to come to me. Now that all this had stopped for days I had lost the art of contriving.

SIKIM'S STORY

**

Panchu's wife has put died of a lingering consumption. Pauchu must undergo a purification ccremony to cleanse humself of sin and to propitiate his community. The community has calculated and informed him that it will cost one hundred and twenty-three rupees

' How absurd ' I cried, highly indignant. ' Don't submit to this, Panchu. What can they do to you?"

Rauing to me hu patient eyes like those of a tired-out beast of burden, he said: 'There is my eldest girl, sir, she will have to be married. And my poor wife's last rites have to be put through."

'Even if the sin were yours, Panchu,' I mused aloud, 'you have surely suffered enough for it already.

'That is so, sir,' he naively assented. 'I had to sell part of my land and mortgage the rest to meet the doctor's bills. But there is no escape from the offerings I have to make the Brahmins."

What was the use of arguing? When will come the time, I wondered, for the purification of the Brahmins themselves who can accept such offerings?

After his wife's illness and funeral, Panchu, who had been tottering on the brink of starvation, went altogether beyond his depth. In a desperate attempt to gain constitution of some sort he mode to tilling in the fee of a mandering ascrite, and succould in accoming pinkesophy enough to keget that his charles went hungry. He kept himself steeped for a fine in the idea that the world is vanity, and if of pleasure it has none, pain also is a delusion. Then, at last, one night he left his little ones in their tamble-down hovel, and started off wandering on his own account.

I knew nothing of this at the time, for just then a veriable occan-charming by gods and demons was going on in my mind. Nor did my master tell me that he had taken Panchu's deserted children under his own roof and was caring for them, though alone in the house, with his school to attend to the whole day.

After a month Panchu came back, his ascetic ferrour considerably worn off. His eldest boy and girl nestled up to him, crying: Where have you been all this time, father?' His youngest boy filed his lap; his second girl leant over his back with her arms round his neck; and they all wept together. 'O sirl' sobbed Panchu, at length, to my master. I have not the power to give these little ones enough to eat, -I am not free to run away from them. What has been my sin that I should be scourged so, bound hand and foot?"

In the meantime the thread of Panchu's little trade connections had snapped and he found could not resume them. He clung on to the shel

D to design care, was kn 1 'ea

After singing the core, Panchics obstache their master fell off counderable in in reverence, with

dinteraking was left out. It result my master small; he asked nothing better than 0 at courtery though toop less loss. Respect given and taken trub bolances the account between man and man," was the way be put it," but veneration is overpayment. Panchu began to buy cloth at the market and pedille it about the sillage. He did not get much of cash payment, it is true, but what he could reside in kind, in the way of rice, jute, and other field.

produce, went towards settlement of his account. In two months time he was able to pay back an instalment of my master's debt, and with it there was a corresponding reduction in the depth of his

NIKHIL'S STORY

bow. He must have begun to feel that he had are everrevering as a saint a mere man; who had are everrisen superior to the lure of lucre.

While Panchu was thus engaged, the fall that of the Swadeshi flood fell on him.

VII

It was vacation time, and many youths of ear village and its neighbourhood had come home for their schools and colleges. They attached their schools and colleges. They attached their schools for the schools and colleges are the some, in their excess of zeal, gave up their subsome, in their excess of zeal, gave up their subsome in their excess of zeal, gave up their subsome form my school here, and some held college scholar ahips from me in Calcutta. They came up in a body, and demanded that I should banish foreignous from my Sulsar market.

I told them I could not do it.

They were sarcastic: "Why, Maharaja, will the loss be too much for you?"

I took no notice of the insult in their tone, at was about to reply that the loss would fall on t poor traders and their customers, not on me, wh my master, who was present, interposed.

'Yes, the loss will be his, -not yours, that is ele

enough,' he said.

But for one's country....

'The country does not mean the soil, but the m on it,' interrupted my master again. 'Have y yet wasted so much as a glance on what w happening to them?' But now your wants.

THE HOME AND THE WORLD what salt they shall eat, what clothes they shall wear.

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Why should they put up with such tyranny, and why should we let them?' 'But we have taken to Indian salt and sugar and cloth ourselves." ' You may do as you please to work off your irri-

tation, to keep up your fanaticism. You are well off, you need not mind the cost The poor do not want to stand in your way, but you insist on their submitting to your compulsion As it is, every moment of theirs is a life-and-death struggle for a bare living; you cannot even imagine the difference a few pice means to them,-so little have you in common You have spent your whole past in a superior compartment, and now you come down to use them as tools for the wreaking of your wrath. I call it cowardly.' They were all old pupils of my master, so they

were quivering with indignation. They turned to 'Will you then be the only one, Maharaja, to put obstacles in the way of what the country would achieve? 'Who am I, that I should dare do such a thing?

did not venture to be disrespectful, though they

Would I not rather lay down my life to help it?" The M.A. student smiled a crooked smile, as he

asked: 'May-we enquire what you are actually

doing to help?' 'I have imported Indian mill-made yarn and kept it for sale in my Suksar market, and also sent bales of it to markets belonging to neighbouring zamindars.

'But we have been to your market, Maharaja,' the same student exclaimed, 'and found nobody buying this yarn.'

'That is neither my fault nor the fault of my market. It only shows the whole country has not

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taken your vow.' 'That is not all,' my master went on that what you have pledged yourselves to do is only to pester others You want dealers, who have not taken your vow, to buy that yarn; weavers, who have not taken your vow, to make it up; then their wares eventually to be fosted on to consumers who. also, have not taken your vow. The method? Your clamour, and the zamindars' oppression. The result: all righteousness yours, all privations theirs!

'And may we venture to ask, further, what your share of the privation has been? pursued a science

student

'You want to know, do you?' replied my master. It is Nikhil himself who has to buy up that Indian mill yarn; he has had to start a weaving school to get it woven; and to judge by his past brilliant business exploits, by the time his cotton fabrics leave the loom their cost will be that of cloth-of-gold; so they will only find a use, perhaps, as curtains for 136 THE ROSE AND THE WORLD OF

the first fineral pyre lighted by your village in celebration of the last rites of foreign commerce. There are sacred ashes. Smear yourselves with them in token of your Stadah yow."

Panchu,' said I, turning to him, 'you must holde a complaint.'

'No one will bear me witness,' he replied.
'None bear witness?—Sandip! Sandip!'

Sandip varie out of his room at my call. What is the matter? he asked.

'Won't you bear witness to the burning of this man's cloth?'

Sandip smiled Of course I shall be a witness in the case, he said But I shall be on the oppo-

witness on this or that side? Will you not bear wit-

ness to the truth?"

'Is the thing which happens the only truth?"

'What other truths can there be?'
'The things that ought to happen! The truth

we must build up will require a great deal of untruth in the process. Those who have made their way in the world have created truth, not blindly followed it.'

'And so——'

'And so I will bear what you people are pleased to call false witness, as they have done who have created empires, built up social systems, founded religious organisations. Those who would rule do d

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not dread untruths; the shackles of truth are reserved for those who will fall under their way. Have you not read history? Do you not know that in the immense cauldrons, where sat political developments are simmering, untruths are the main ingredients?

'Political cookery on a large scale is doubtless

Oh, I know You, of course, will never do any of the cooking You prefer to be one of those down

of education and call it raising the standard. By you will always remain good boys, niveling layou corners. We had men, however, must tee whether we cannot erect a defensive fortification of 'It is no use arguing about these things, while

'It is no use arguing about these things, Nilla's my master interposed. 'How can they made feel the truth within them, realise that to bring a out from its observant into the light is man's high aim,—not to keep on heaping, material outside.'

Sandip laughted. 'Right, sir's aid he gets

Sandip langurer segment and ne. Que a correct speech for a schoolmaster. That a ge kind of stuff I have read in books; but in the world I have seen that man's chief businest accumulation of outside material. Those was matters in the art, advertise the biggest light was business, enter false accounts in their parents with their broadest-pointed

preathers abroad to disseminate falsebood like flies carrying pestilential germs. I am a lumble follower of these great mes. When I was attached to the Congress parts I never heritated to dilute ten per cent of truth with ninety per cent of untruth. And now, merely because I have ceased to belong

newspapers daily faden with maraths, and send

to that party, I have not forcotten the basic fact that man's goal is not truth but success."

'True success,' corrected my master.

' May be,' replied Sandip, 'but the fruit of true success ripens only by cultivating the field of untruth, after tearing up the soil and pounding it into dust Truth grows up by itself like weeds and thorns, and only worms can expect to get fruit from it!' With this he flung out of the room,

My master smiled as he looked towards me. ' Do you know, Nikhil,' he said, ' I believe Sandip is not irreligious,-his religion is of the obverse side of truth, like the dark moon, which is still a moon, for all that its fight has gone over to the wrong side '

'That is why,' I assented, 'I have always had an affection for him, though we have never been able to agree. I cannot contemn him, even now; though he has hurt me sorely, and may yet hurt me more.

'I have begun to realise that,' said my master. 'I have long wondered how you could go on putting up with him. I have, at times, even sus-



entered into formal poversion. Then the trouble began. Panelin had inherited the holding of his grand-

father as his sole surviving heir. Every body knew this. But at this juncture an aunt turned up from somewhere, with her boxes and bundles, her rosary, and widowed niece She ensconced herself in Panchu's home and laid claim to a life interest in all he had-

Panchu was dumbfounded . My aunt died long ago,' he protested. In reply he was told that he was thinking of his uncle's first wife, but that the former had lost at

time in taking to lumself a second 'But my uncle died before my aunt,' exclaimet

Panchu, still more mystified. 'Where was the time for him to marry again?"

This was not denied. But Panchu was reminded that it had never been asserted that the second wife had come after the death of the first, but the former had been married by his uncle during the latter's beetime. Not relishing the idea of living with a co-wife she had remained in her father's house till her husband's death, after which she had got religion and retired to holy Brindaban, whence she was now coming These facts were well known to the officers of Harish Kundu, as well as to some of his tenants. And if the zamindar's summons

should be peremptory enough, even some of those who had partaken of the marriage feast would be Jacoming!

ıx One afternoon, when I happened to be specially busy, word came to my office room that Bimsh had sent for me. I was startled.

'Who did you say had sent for me?' I asked the messenger

'The Ran Mother.'

'The Bara Rani?'

' No, sir, the Chota Rani Mother.'

The Chota Rani It seemed a century since 1 had been sent for by her. I kept them all walting there, and went off into the inner apartment

. which from persistent neglect had latterly acquired an air of having grown absent-minded, had regained tone thing of its old order this afternoon I stood it ...

Then she abruptly broke the filence log here! Is it right that ours should be the only fix. here! Is it right which allows foreign good; t in all Bengal Wines. So the right thing to de?

I asked 'Order them to be cleared out!

'But the goods are not mine

' Is not the market yours?'

'Is not the market,
'It is much more theurs who use it has

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'Let them trade in Indian goods, then.' 'Nothing would please me better. But suppose they do not?"

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'Nonsense! How dare they be so insolent?

Are you not . . 'I am very busy this afternoon and cannot stop to argue it out But I must refuse to tyrannise.'

' It would not be tyranny for selfish gain, but for the sake of the country." 'To tyrannise for the country is to tyrannise

over the country But that I am afraid you will never understand.' With this I came away. All of a sudden the world shone out for me with a fresh clearness. I seemed to feel it in my blood, that the Earth had lost the weight of its earthiness,

and its daily task of sustaining life no longer appeared a burden, as with a wonderful access of power it whirled through space telling its beads of days and nights What endless work, and withal what illimitable energy of freedom! None shall check it, oh, none can ever check it! From the depths of my being an uprush of joy, like a water-

spout, sprang high to storm the skies. I repeatedly asked myself the meaning of this outburst of feeling At first there was no intelligible answer. Then it became clear that the bond against which I had been fretting inwardly, night and day, had broken. To my surprise I discovered that my mind was freed from all mistiness. I could see everything relating to Bimala as if vividly pic-



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dom to which our ideals call us. She who makes for us the banner under which we fare forth is the true Woman for us We must tear away the disguise of her who weaves our net of enchantment at home, and know her for what she is. We must beware of clothing her in the witchery of our own longings and imaginings, and thus allow her to distract us from our true quest

To-day I feel that I shall win through. I have come to the gateway of the simple; I am now content to see things as they are. I have gained freedom myself; I shall allow freedom to others. In my work will be my salvation. I know that, time and again, my heart will ache,

but now that I understand its pain in all its truth, I can disregard it. Now that I know it concerns only me, what after all can be its value? The suffering which belongs to all mankind shall be my crown. Save mc. Trudi! Never again let me hanker after the false paradise of Illusion. If I must walk alone, let me at least tread your path. Let the drum-beats of Truth lead me to Victory

SANDIP'S STORY

1777

Bimala sent for me that day, but for a time she could not utter a word; her eyes kept brimming up to the verge of overflowing. I could see at once that she had been unsuccessful with Nikhil. She

d been so proudly confident that she would have τ own way,—but I had never shared her confince. Woman knows man well enough where he weak, but she is quite unable to fathom him where

nce. Woman knows man well enough where he weak, but she is quite unable to fathom him where is strong. The fact is that man is as much a systery to woman as woman is to man. If that ere not so, the separation of the sexes would only

ere not so, the separation of the sexes would only ave been a waste of Nature's energy.

Ah pride, pride! The trouble was, not that the eccessary thing had failed of accomplishment, but hat the entreaty, which had cost her such a strug to make, should have been refused. What a wealth of colour and movement, suggestion an leception, group themselves round this "me' an inte' in woman. That is just where here beaut

iles,—she is ever so much more personal than mar

master,—His bag full of commandments and prit ciples; but when He came to woman, He resigne His headmastership and turned artist, with only His brush and paint-box.

When Bimala stood salendy there, flushed and tearful in her broken pride, like a storm-cloud, laden with rain and charged with lightning, lowering over the horizon, the looked so absolutely sweet that I

had to go to right up to her and take her by the hand. It was trembling, but she did not snatch it away. 'Bee,' said I, 'we two are colleagues for our aims are one. Let us sit down and over.'

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VI.

I began to make a list of the workers who had joined us from Calcutta and to assign their duties to each. Bimala interrupted me before I was through, saying wearily: 'Leave it now; I will join you again this evening '; and then she hurried out of the room. It was evident she was not in a state to attend to anything. She must be alone with herself for a while,—perhaps lie down on her bed and have a good erv!

When she left me, my intoxication began to deepen, as the cloud colours grow refler after the sun is down. I felt I had let the moment of moments slip by. What an awful coward I had been! She must have left me in sheer disgust at my qualms—and she was right!

qualms—and she was right!

While I was tingling all over with these reflections, a servant came in and announced Amulya, one of our boys. I felt like sending him away for the time, but he stepped in before I could make up my mind. Then we fell to discussing the news of the fights which were ranging in different quarters over cloth and sugar and salt; and the air was soon clear of all funes of intoxication. I felt as if awaltened from a dream. Heapt to my feet feeling quite ready for the frax,—Bande Materam!

The news was various. Most of the traders who

The news was various. Most of the traders who were tenants of Harish Kundu had come over to us. Many of Nikhil's officials were also secretly on our side, pulling the wires in our interest. The Marwari shopkeepers were offering to pay a penalty, if

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I led her, unresisting, to a seat. But strange! at

that very point the rush of my impetuosity suffered an unaccountable check,-just as the current of the mighty Padma, roaring on in its irresistible course, all of a sudden gets turned away from the bank it is crumbling by some trifling obstacle beneath the sur-

When I pressed Bimala's hand my nerves rang music, like tuned-up strings; but the symphony stopped short at the first movement. What stood in the way? Nothing singly; it was

a tangle of a multitude of things, -nothing definitely palpable, but only that unaccountable sense of obstruction. Anyhow, this much has become plain to me, that I cannot swear to what I really am. It is because I am such a mystery to my own mind that my attraction for myself is so strong! If once the whole of myself should become known to me, I would then fling it all away, -and reach beatitude!

As she sat down, Bimala went ashy pale. She, too, must have realised what a crisis had come and gone, leaving her unscathed. The comet had passed by, but the brush of its burning tail had overcome her. To help her to recover herself I said. 'Obstacles there will be, but let us fight them through, and

not be down-hearted Is not that best, Queen?" Bimala cleared her throat with a little cough, but

simply to murmur: 'Yes.' 'Let us sketch out our plan of action,' I continued, as I drew a piece of paper and a pencil from my pocket.

on them, not on us. If they go to law, we must retaliate by burning down their granaries!-What startles you, Amulya? It is not the prospect of a grand illumination that delights me! You must remember, this is War. If you are afraid of causing suffering, go in for love-making, you will never do for this work! The second problem I solved by deciding to allow

no compromise with foreign articles, in any circumstance whatever In the good old days, when these gaily coloured foreign shawls were unknown, our peasantry used to manage well enough with plain cotton quilts,-they must learn to do so again. They may not look as gorgeous, but this is not the time to think of looks

Most of the boatmen had been won over to refuse to carry foreign goods, but the chief of them, Mirjan, was still insubordinate.

'Could you not get his boat sunk?' I asked our

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manager here. 'Nothing easier, sir,' he replied 'But what if

afterwards I am held responsible 3"

'Why be so clumsy as to leave any loophole for responsibility? However, if there must be any, my shoulders will be there to bear it '

Mirjan's boat was ned near the landing-place after its freight had been taken over to the marketplace. There was no one on it, for the manager had arranged for some entertainment to which all had been invited. After dusk the boat, loaded with only allowed to clear their present stocks. Only some Mahomedan traders were still obdurate.

One of them was taking home some Germanmade shawls for his family. These were confuscated and burnt by one of our village boys. This had given rise to trouble. We offered to buy him Indian woollen stuffs in their place. But where

were cheap Indian woollens to be had? We could not very well indulge him in Castimere shaw!! He came and complained to Nikhil, who advised him to go to law. Of course Nikhil's men saw to it that

the trial should come to nothing, even his lawagent being on our side!

The point is, if we have to replace burnt foreign clothes with Indian cloth every time, and on the top of that fight through a law-suit, where is the money to come from.

of that fight through a law-suit, where is the money to come from 2. And the beauty of it is that this destruction of foreign goods is increasing their demand and sending up the foreigner's profits,—very like what happened to the fortunate shopkeeper whose chandeliers the nabob delighted in smashing.

tickled by the tinkle of the breaking glass.

The next problem is,—since there is no such thing as cheap and gaudy Indian woollen stuff, should we rigorous in our boycott of foreign flannels and merinos, or make an exception in their favour?

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'Look here' said I at leigth on the first point,
we are not going to heep on making presents of
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Nece There was no one on it, for the manager had arranged for some entertainment to which all had been insited. After dusk the boat, loaded with

rubbish, was holed and set adrift. It sank in mistream. Mirjan understood the whole thing. He came

me in tears to beg for mercy. 'I was wrong, sirhe began. 'What makes you realise that all of a sudden?'

He made no direct reply. 'The boat was wort Rs 2000,' he said 'I now see my mistake, and excused this time I will never. . . ' with wh

I asked hum to come ten days later. If only could pay him that Rs. 2000 at once, could buy him up body and soul. This is ju the sort of man who could render us immense a vice, if won over. We shall never be able to ma any headway onless we can lay our hands on plen

As soon as Bimala came into the sitting-room,: the evening. I said as I rose up to receive he 'Oueen! Everything is ready, success is at han

'A mere fifty thousand rupees will do for th

Bimala blenched inwardly at the figure, but trie not to show it. How could she again admit defeat

succred.

of money

must have it!" ' But how much?'

present.

he threw himself at my feet

but we must have money.' 'Money? How much money?" 'Not so very much, but by hook or by crook w







CHAPTER VII

SANDIP'S STORY

VIII

We are men, we are kings, we must have our tibute. Ever since we have come upon the Earth we have been plundering her, and the more we claimed, the more she submitted. From primaral days have we men been plucking fruits, cutting down trees, digging up the soil, killing beast, bird and fish. From the bottom of the sea, from underneath the ground, from the very jaws of death, it has all been grabbing and grabbing and grabbing no strong-box in Nature's store-room has been repected or left unrilled

The one delight of this Earth is to fulfil the elalmi of those who are men. She has been made fertile and beautiful and complete through her endless sacrifices to them. But for this, she would be lost in the wilderness, not knowing herself, the doors of her heart shut, her diamonds and pearls never seeing the light.

Likewise, by sheer force of our claims, we men have opened up all the latent possibilities of women-In the process of surrendering themselves to us, they have ever gained their true greatness. Because they had to bring all the diamonds of their happiness and the pearls of their sorrow into our royal treasury.

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e men-but Delusion, which is only for cowards, impers them. Because delusion keeps them wraped up in past and future, but is the very deuce for mfounding their footsteps in the present. Those ho are always straining their ears for the call of te remote, to the neglect of the call of the immi-

ent, are like Sakuntala1 absorbed in the memories her lover. The guest comes unheeded, and the arse descends, depriving them of the very object f their desire. The other day I pressed Bimala's hand, and that such still stirs her mind, as it vibrates in mine. Its

will must not be deadened by repetition, for then hat is now music will descend to mere argument. here is at present no room in her mind for the uestion 'why?' So I must not deprive Bimala, ho is one of those creatures for whom illusion is ecessary, of her full supply of it. As for me, I have so much else to do that I shall ave to be content for the present with the foam f the wine cup of passion. O man of desire! lurb your greed, and practise your hand on the arp of illusion till you can bring out all the delicate uances of suggestion. This is not the time to

rain the cup to the dregs.

¹ Sakuntala, after the king, her lover, went back so his kingdom, promany to send for her, was so lost on thoughts of him, that she failed to tar the call of her hermut guest, who thereupon cursed her, saying that te object of her love would forget all about her -Tr

eligment stored away within us, an I so I was about max in I grant with the engineers, and enter in in that's a tirade against the unreliability of our northwest. But, if there he a god, I must as nowledge with grantiale to him that he has given nactrat seeing mire to which allows nothing inside countries to terminal cappe. I may deligh others it meret eman't had been unable to continue

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could carry it out, would set fire to the whole country. True patriotism will never be roused in our countrymen unless they can visualise the notherland. We must make a goddess of her. My olleagues saw the point at once 'Let us devise in appropriate image, they exclaimed 'It will not do if you devise it, I admonished them 'We nust get one of the current images accepted as reresenting the country,—the worship of the people hust flow towards it along the deep-cut grooves of ustom.

But Nikhil's needs must argue even about this, We must not seek the help of illusions,' he said to ne some time ago, ' for what we believe to be the rue cause,'

'Illusions are necessary for lesser minds,' I said, and to this class the greater portion of the world clongs. That is why divinities are set up in every ountry to keep up the illusions of the people, for en are only too well aware of their weakness. 'No,' he replied 'God is necessary to clear way our illusions The divinities which keep them live are false gods.'

What of that? If need be, even false gods must e invoked, rather than let the work suffer Unortunately for us, our illusions are alive enough, but e do not know how to make them serve our pur.

ose. Look at the Brahmins In spite of our treating tem as demi-gods, and unturnigly taking the dust their feet, they are a force going to



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that we seek the good of the country along the path of righteousness, He who is greater than our country will grant us true fruition.

The unfortunate part of it is that Nikhil's words sound so fine when put down on paper My words, however, are not meant to be scribbled on paper, but to be scored into the heart of the country The Pandit records his Treatise on Agriculture in printer's ink, but the cultivator at the point of his plough impresses his endeavour deep in the soil

When I next saw Bimala I pitched my key high without further ado 'Have we been able,' I began, 'to believe with all our heart in the god for whose worship we have been born all these millions of years, until he actually made himself visible to 114 2

' How often have I told you,' I continued, ' that had I not seen you I never would have known all my country as One. I know not yet whether you rightly understand me. The gods are invisible only in their heaven .-- on earth they show themselves to mortal men '

Bimala looked at me in a strange kind of way as she gravely replied: 'Indeed I understand you, Sandip.' This was the first time she called me plain Sandip.

'Krishna,' I continued, 'whom Arjuna ordinarily knew only as the driver of his chariot, had also His

THE HOME AND THE WORLD 'What I am afraid of,' said Nikhil, 'is, that my lifetime is limited and the result you speak of is not

the final result. It will have after-effects which may not be immediately apparent." 'I only seek the result,' said I, ' which belongs to to-day

'The result I seek,' answered Nikhil, 'belor to all time." Nikhil may have had his share of Bengal's great gift-imagination, but he has allowed it to be ove

shadowed and nearly killed by an exotic conscie tiousness Just look at the worship of Durga which Bengal has carried to such heights That is one her greatest achievements. I can swear that Durg is a political goddess and was conceived as the imas of the Shakti of patriotism in the days when Bengwas praying to be delivered from Mussulman dom What other province of India has succede

in giving such wonderful visual expression to th ideal of its quest ' Nothing betraved Nikhil's loss of the divine gif of imagination more conclusively than his reply t me. During the Mussulman domination,' he said the Maratha and the Sikh asked for fruit from the arms which they themselves took up. The Bengal

contented himself with placing weapons in the hand of his goddess and muttering incantations to her and as his country did not really happen to be a goddess the only fruit he got was the lopped-off heads of the goats and buffaloes of the sacrifice. The day

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When I next saw Binala I pitched my key high without further ado 'Have we been able,' I began, 'to believe with all our heart in the god for whose worship we have been born all these millions of years, with he actually made himself insible to us?

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'Krishna,' I continued, 'whom Arjuna ordinarily knew only as the driver of his chariot, had also His

universal aspect, of which, too, Arjuna had a vision one day, and that day he saw the Truth. I have seen your Universal Aspect in my country. The Ganges and the Brahmaputra are the chains of gold that wind round and round your neck; in the wood-

land fringes on the distant banks of the dark waters

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of the river, I have seen your collyrium-darkened eyelashes; the changeful sheen of your sars moves for me in the play of light and shade amongst the swaying shoots of green corn; and the blazing summer heat, which makes the whole sky lie gasping like a red-tongued hon in the desert, is nothing but your cruel radiance 'Since the goddess has vouchsafed her presence to her votary in such wonderful guise, it is for me to proclaim her worship throughout our land, and

then shall the country gain new life "Your image make we in temple after temple " But this our people have not yet fully realised So I would call on them in your name and offer for their worship an image from which none shall be able to withhold belief. Oh give me this boon, this power,' Bimala's eyelids drooped and ske became rigid in her seat like a figure of stone. Had I continued she would have gone off into a trance When I ceased speaking she opened wide her eyes, and murmured

with fixed gaze, as though still dazed: 'O Traveller in the path of Destruction! Who is there that can stay your progress? Do I not see that none shall

A line from Bankim Charterye's national song * Hands Massem *

stand in the way of your desires? Kings shall lay their crowns at your feet, the wealthy shall hasten to throw open their treasure for your acceptance; those who have nothing else shall beg to be allowed to offer their lives. O my king, my god! What you have seen in me I know not, but I have seen theimmensity of your grandeur in my heart. Who am I, what am I, in its presence? Ah, the awful power of Devastation! Never shall I truly live till it kills me utterly! I can bear it no longer, my heart is breaking!

Bimala slid down from her seat and fell at my feet, which she clasped, and then she sobbed and sobbed and sobbed

This is hypnotism indeed,---the charm which can subdue the world! No materials, no weapons,

astride her hon, and spread her worship in the land Bengal must now create a new image to enchang and conquer the world. Bande Mataram !

I gently lifted Bimala back into her chair, and lest reaction should set in, I began again without losing time; 'Queen! The Divine Mother has laid on me the duty of establishing her worship in the land. But, alas, I am poor!

Bimala was still flushed, her eyes clouded, her A quotation from the Upanishads.



money after the high flight we have just taken?

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And yet time is precious¹
I crushed all hesitation under foot as I jumpe up and made my plunge: 'Queen! Our purse;

empty, our work about to stop!"

Bimala winced I could see she was thinking of that impossible Rs 50,000 What a load she must have been carrying within her bosom, struggling under it, perhaps, through sleepless nights! What else had she with which to express her loving worship? Debarred from offering her heart at my feet, she hankers to make this sum of money, so hopelessly large for her, the bearer of her imprisoned feelings. The thought of what she must have gone through gives me a twinge of pain; for she is now wholly mine. The wrench of plucking up the plant by the roots is over. It is now only careful

tending and nurture that is needed
'Queen!' said I, 'that Rs 50,000 is not particularly wanted just now I calculate that, for the

present, five thousand or even three will serve.'

The relief made her heart rebound. 'I shall fetch you five thousand,' she said in tones which

fetch you five thousand,' she said in tones which seemed like an outburst of song,—the song which Radhika of the Vaishnava lyries sang:

For my lover will I bind in my hair The flower which has no count in the three worlds

-it is the same tune, the same song: five thousand will I bring! That flower will I bind in my hair!

The narrow restraint of the flute brings out this

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accents thick, as she replied: 'You poor? Is not all that each one has yours? What are my caskets full of jewellery for? Drag away from me all my gold and gems for your worship. I have no use for them!

Once before Bimala had offered up her ornaments I am not usually m the habit of drawing lines, but I felt I had to draw the line there.1 I know why I feel this hesitation. It is for man to give ornaments to woman; to take them from her

wounds his manhness But I must forget my self Am I taking them? They are for the Davine Mother, to be poured in worship at her feet. Oh, but it must be a grand ceremony of worship such as the country has never heheld before It must be a landmark in our history. It shall be my supreme legacy to the Nation. Igno-

rant men worship gods I, Sandip, shall create them. But all this is a far cry What about the urgent immediate? At least three thousand is indispensably necessary-five thousand would do roundly and nicely. But how on earth am I to mention

There is a world of sentiment attached to the ornaments worn by women in Bengal They are not merely indicative of the love and regard of the over, but the nearing of them symbolises all that is held best in wifehood, -the constant solicitude for her husband's welfare, the successful performance of the maternal and spiritual duties of the household entrusted to her care. When the husband dier, and the responsibility for the household changes hands, then are all ornaments cast aude as a sign of the widow's renunciation of worldly concerns. At any other time the giving up of ornaments is always a sign of supreme distress and as such appeals acutely to the sense of chilvalry of any Bengali who may happen to witness st -Tr

money after the high flight we have just taken? And yet time is precious!

I crushed all hesitation under foot as I jumped up and made my plunge 'Queen' Our purse is

empty, our work about to stop! Bimala winced I could see she was thinking of that impossible Rs 50,000 What a load she must have been carrying within her bosom, struggling under it, perhaps, through sleepless nights! What else had she with which to express her loving worship? Debarred from ollering her heart at my feet, she hankers to make this sum of money, so hopelessly large for her, the bearer of her imprisoned feelings The thought of what she must have tone through gives me a twinge of pain; for she is now wholly mine The wrench of plucking up the plant by the roots is over It is now only careful lending and nurture that is needed

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The narrow restraint of the flute brings out this

168 THE HOME AND THE WORLD quality of song I must not allow the pressure of

too much greed to flatten out the reed, for then, as I fear, music will give place to the questions 'Why?' "What is the use of so much?" "How am I to get it?'-not a word of which will rhyme with what Radhika sang! So, as I was saying, illusion alone is real,-it is the flute itself; while truth is but its

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empty hollow. Nikhil has of late got a taste of that pure emptiness,-one can see it in his face, which pains even me But it was Nikhil's boast that he wanted the Truth, while mine was that I would never let go illusion from my grasp. Each has been suited to his taste, so why complain? To keep Bimala's heart in the rarefied air idealism. I cut short all further discussion over t five thousand rupees I reverted to the demo destroying goddess and her worship When w the ceremony to be held and where? There is great annual fair at Ruimari, within Nikhil's estate where hundreds of thousands of pilgrims assembl

worship of our goddess! Bimala waxed intensely enthusiastic. This wa not the burning of foreign cloth or the people granaries, so even Nikhil could have no objection,so thought she. But I smiled inwardly. How littl these two persons, who have been together, day and night, for nine whole years, know of each other They know something perhaps of their home life but when it comes to outside concerns they are en

That would be a grand place to inaugurate the

tirely at sea. They had cherished the behef that the harmony of the home with the outside was perfect. To-day they realise to their cost that it is too late to repair their neglect of veirs, and seek to harmonise them now

What does it matter? Let those who have made the mistake learn their error by knowking against the world. Why need I bother does their plight? For the present I find it weattoons to keep Bimala soaring much longer, like a captive balloon, in regions ethereal. I had better get quote through with the matter in hand

When Bimala rose to depart and had neared the door I remarked in my most could manner 'So about the money.

Bimala halted and fored back is she said 'On the expiry of the month, when our personal allowances become due

- 'That, I am afraid, would be much too late
- 'When do you want it then ' To-morrow.
- 'To-morrow you shall have t

CHAPTER VIII

VIKILL'S STORY

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PARAGRAPHS and letters against me have begun to come out in the local papers, cartoons and lampoons are to follow, I am told. Jets of wit and humour are being splashed about, and the lies thus scattered are convulsing the whole country. They know that the monopoly of mudthrowing is theirs, and the innocent passer-by cannot scape unsoiled.

They are saying that the residents in my estates, from the highest to the lowest, are in favour of Swadeth, but they dare not declare themselves, for fear of me. The few who have been brave enough to defy me have felt the full rigour of my persecution. I am in secret league with the police, and in private communication with the magistrate, and these fraintic efforts of mine to add a foreign title of my own earning to the one I have inherited, will not, it is opined, go my win.

On the other hand, the papers are full of praise for those devoted sons of the motherland, the Kundu and the Chakravart zamadars. If only, say they, the country had a few more of such staunch patriots, the mills of Manchester would have had to sound their own dirge to the tune of Bande Mataram

Then comes a letter in blood-red ink, giving a list

of the traitorous zammdars whose treasuries have been burnt down because of their failing to support the Cause. Holy Fire, it goes on to say, has been aroused to its sacred function of purifying the country; and other agencies are also at work to see that those who are not true sons of the motherland do cease to encumber her lap. The signature is an

obvious nom-de-plume

I could see that this was the doing of our local students So I sent for some of them and showed them the letter.

The B.A student gravely informed me that they also had heard that a band of desperate partiest had been formed who would stuck at nothing in order to clear away all obstacles to the success of Swadeth.

'If,' said I, 'even one of our countrymen succumbs to these overbearing desperadoes, that will indeed be a defeat for the country!'

'We fail to follow you, Maharaja,' said the history student
'Our country,' I tried to explain, 'has been

'Our country,' I tred to explain, 'has been brought to death's door through sheer fear,—from fear of the gods down to fear of the police, and it you set up, in the name of freedom, the fear of some other bogey, whatever it may be called; if you would raise your victorious standard on the cowardce of the country by means of downright oppression, then no true lover of the country can bow to your decision.

CHAPTER VIII

NIGHTL'S STORY

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you not heard of the obstreperous tenant of Chakravarti, the other zamındar close by,—how the law was

ward, meonier zemman took ye. Took int alw was set on him till he was reduced to utter destrution? When at last he was left with nothing to eat, he started out to sell his wife's silver ornaments, but no one dared buy them Then Chakravarti's manager offered him five rupees for the lot. They were

ger onered him twe rupees for the for They were worth over thirty, but he had to accept or starve. After taking over the bundle from him the manager coolly said that those five rupees would be credited towards his rent! We felt like having nothing more to do with Chakravaru or his manager after that, but Sandip Babu told us that if we threw over all the live people, we should have only dead bodies from the burning-grounds to carry on the work with! These live men, he pointed out, know what they want and how to get it,—they are born rules?

Those who do not know how to desire for themselves, must live an accordance with, or die by virtue
of, the desires of such as these Sandip Babu contrasted them—Kundu and Chakravartt—with you,
Maharaja You, he said, for all your good intentions, will never succeed in planting Swadesh within your territory.

'It is my desire,' I said, 'to plant something
greater than Swadesh.' I am not after dead logs but

living trees,—and these will take time to grow.'
'I am afraid, sir,' sneered the history student,
'that you will get neither log nor tree. Sandip
Babu rightly teaches that in order to get, you must



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rent-collector of Harish Kundu's found one of the tenants with nothing which could be sold up to pay his rent, he was made to sell his young wife! Buyers were not wanting, and the zamındar's demand was satisfied I tell you, sir, the sight of that man's distress prevented my getting sleep for nights together! But, feel it as I did, this much I realised, that the man who knows how to get the money be

because it runs counter to what we were taught at school. I have seen with my own eyes that when a

is out for, even by selling up his debtor's wife, is a better man than I am I confess it is beyond me.-I am a weakhing, my eyes fill with tears body can save our country it is these Kinidas and these Chakravarus and their otherals?" I was shocked beyond words . If what you say Le true,' I cried. I clearly see that it must be the one endeavour et my life to save the country from

these same kindus and Chakras irtis and officiali. The slavers that has entered into our very lames in breaking out, at this opportunity, as ghastly tyranny, You have been so used to submit to dominater? through fear, you have come to believe that to make

others submit is a kind of religion. My fight shift be against this weakness, this attrained expelled!" These things, which are so umple to ced "it's folk, per so twitted in the minds of our BA's and M.A.'s, the only purpose of whose Historical spotles seems to be to testere it e truth!

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I am worried over Panchu's sham aunt. It will be difficult to disprove her, for though witnesses of a real event may be few or even wanting, innumerable proofs of a thing that has not lappened can always be marshalled. The object of this move is, evidently, to get the sale of Panchu's holding to me set aside.

Being unable to find any other way out of it, I was thinking of allowing Panchu to hold a permanent return in my estates and building him a cottage on it. But my master would not have it. I should not give in to these nefarious tactics so easily, he objected, and offered to attend to the matter himself.

'You, sir!' I eried, considerably surprised 'Yes, I,' he repeated

I could not see, at all clearly, what my master could do to counteract these legal machinations. That evening, at the time he usually came to me, he did not turn up. On my making inquiries, his

uncle's village. In that case, however, I was sure that his would be a hopeless quest...

During the day I forget myself in my work. At the late autumn afternoon wears on, the colours of the sky become turbid, and so do the feelings of m.

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dwell in brick-built houses,-they can afford to ignore the thing called the outside. But my mind lives under the trees in the open, directly receives upon itself the messages borne by the free winds, and responds from the bottom of its heart to all the musical cadences of light and darkness.

While the day is bright and the world in the pursuit of its numberless tasks crowds around, then it seems as if my life wants nothing else. But when the colours of the sky fade away and the blinds are drawn down over the windows of heaven, then my heart tells me that evening falls just for the purpose

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of shutting out the world, to mark the time when the darkness must be filled with the One. This is the end to which earth, sky, and waters conspire, and I cannot harden myself against accepting its meaning So when the gloaming deepens over the world, like the gaze of the dark eyes of the beloved. then my whole being tells me that work alone cannot be the truth of life, that work is not the be-all and the end-all of man, for man is not simply a serf,-even though the serfdom be of the True and the Good Alas, Nikhil, have you for ever parted company with that self of yours who used to be set free under

the starlight, to plunge into the infinite depths of terribly alone is he, who misses companionip in the midst of the multitudinousness of life.

the night's darkness after the day's work was done?

mind. There are many in this world whose minds

The other day, when the afternoon had reached the meeting-point of day and night, I had no work, nor the mind for work, nor was my master there to keep me company. With my empty, drifting heart logging to anchor on to something. I traced my steps towards the inner gardens I was very fond of chrysanthemums and had rows of them, of all varieties, banked up in pois against one of the garden walls. When they were in flower, it looked like a wave of green breaking into iridescent foam. It was some time since I had been to this part of the grounds, and I was beguiled into a cheerful expectancy at the thought of meeting my chrysanthemum after our long separation.

At I went in, the full moon had just peeped over the wall, her slanting rays leaving its foot in deep thadow. It seemed as if she had come a-tiptoe from behind, and elasped the darkness over the eve, smiling mischievously. When I came near the bank of chrysanthemums. I saw a figure stretched on the grass in front. My heart gave a sudden thad. The figure also sat up with a start at my footsteps.

What was to be done next? I was wondering whether it would do to beat a precipitate retreat, Binala, also, was doubtless casting about for some way of escape. But it was as awkward to go as tay! Before I could make up my mind, Binala rose, pulled the end of her sari over head, and walked off towards the inner apartments.

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amrita,-which the gods have drunk and become immortal We cannot see Beauty till we let go our hold of it It was Buddha who conquered the world, not Alexander,-this is untrue when stated

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in dry prose, -- oh when shall we be able to sing it? When shall all these most intimate truths of the universe overflow the pages of printed books and leap out in a sacred stream like the Ganges from the Gancotrie?" I was suddenly reminded of my master's absence

during the last few days and of my ignorance as its reason I felt somewhat foolish as I asked him. And where have you been all this while, sir?" Staying with Panchu, he replied 'Indeed' I exclumed . Have you been there all these days?"

'Yes I wanted to come to an understanding with the woman who calls herself his aunt She could hardly be induced to believe that there could be such an odd character among the gentlefolk as the one who sought their hospitalits. When she found I really meant to stay on, she began to feel rather athamed of herself "Mother," said I, "you are not going to get rid of me, even if you above met And so long as I stay, Panchu stays also for

you see, do you not, that I cannot stand by and see t is most extens little ones sent east into the streets?" "She latened to my talks in this strain for a mayle of days without saving yes or no. This VШ NIKHIL'S STORY 181

morning I found her type up her bundles. "We are going back to Brindaban," she said. "Let us have our expenses for the journey." I knew she was not going to Brindaban, and also that the cost of her journey would be substantial So I have come to you.'

'The required cost shall be paid,' I said

'The old woman is not a bad sort,' my master went on musingly. 'Panchu was not sure of her caste, and would not let her touch the water-jar, or anything at all of his. So they were continually bickering. When she found I had no objection to her touch, she looked after me devotedly She is a splendid cook!

But all remnants of Panchu's respect for me vanished! To the last he had thought that I was at least a simple sort of person But here was I, risking my caste without a qualm to win over the old woman for my purpose Had I tried to steal a march on her by tutoring a witness for the trial, that would have been a different matter. Tactics must be met by tactics. But stratagem at the expense of orthodoxy is more than he can tolerate! 'Anyhow, I must stay on a few days at Panchu's even after the woman leaves, for Harish Kundu may

be up to any kind of devilry He has been telling his satellites that he was content to have furnished Panchu with an aunt, but I have gone the length of supplying him with a father. He would like to see, now, how many fathers of his can save him!"

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when we realise even a little of it we find it to be arrita.- which the gods have drunk and become immortal. We cannot see Beauty till we let go our hold of it. It was Buddha who conquered the

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morning I found her tying up her bundles. "We are going back to Brindaban," she said. "Let us have our expenses for the journey" I knew she was not going to Brindaban, and also that the cost of her journey would be substantial. So I have come to you."

'The required cost shall be paid,' I said 'The old woman is not a bad sort,' my master went on musingly. 'Panchu was not sure of her caste, and would not let her touch the water-jar, or anything at all of his So they were continually bickering. When she found I had no objection to her touch, she looked after me devotedly. She is a splendid cook!

But all remnants of Panchu's respect for me tanshed! To the last he had thought that I was at least a simple sort of person But here was I, risking my caste without a qualm to win over the old woman for my purpose. Had I tried to steal a march on her by tutoring a witness for the trial, that would have been a different matter Tactics must be met by tactics. But stratagem at the expense of orthodoxy is more than he can tolerate!

Anyhow, I must stay on a few days at Panchu's ten after the woman leaves, for Harish Kundu may be up to any kind of devilry. He has been telling his satellites that he was content to have furnished Panchu with an aunt, but I have gone the length of supplying him with a father. He would like to see, now, how many fathers of his can save him!

cu

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'We may or may not be able to save him,' I said;
'but if we should perish in the attempt to save the country from the thousand-and-one snares—of religion, custom and selfishness—which these people are busy spreading, we shall at least die happ.'

BIMALA'S STORY

XIX

Who could have thought that so much would happen in this one life? I feel as if I have passed through a whole series of births, time has been flying so fast, I did not feel it move at all, till the shock came, the other day.

I knew there would be words between us when I made up my mind to ask my husband to banish foreign goods from our market. But it was my firm belief that I had no need to meet argument by argument, for there was mage in the very air about me Had not so tremendous a man as Sandip fallen help lessly at my feet, like a wave of the mighty set breaking on the shore? Had I called him? No it was the summons of that magic spell of mine Anni Amulya, poor dear boy, when he first came to me—how the current of his hie flushed with colour like the river at dawn? Truly have I realised how a goddess feels when she looks upon the radiant face of her devotee.

With the confidence begotten of these proof, of my power, I was ready to meet my husband like a



When I came to my room to-day, I saw only furnture—only the bedstead, only the looking-glas, only the clothes-rack—not the all-pervading heart which used to be there, over all. Instead of it there was freedom, only freedom, mere emptiness! A dened-up watercourse with all its rocks and pebbles laid bare. No feeline, only furniture!

When I had arrived at a state of utter bewilderment, wondering whether anything true was left in my life, and whereabouts it could be, I happened to meet Sandip again. Then life struck against life, and the sparks flew in the same old way. Here was truth—impetuous truth—which rushed in and overflowed all bounds, truth which was a thousand times truer than the Bara Rani with her maid, Thako and her silly songs, and all the rest of them who talked and laughed and wandered about....

'Fifty thousand?' Sandip had demanded.
'What is fifty thousand?' cried my intoxicated heart. 'You shall have it!
How to get it, where to get it, were minor points.

triow to get it, where to get it, were minor points not worth troubling over. Look at me. Had I not risen, all in one moment, from my nothingness to a height above everything? So shall all things come at my beck and call I shall get it, get it, get it, there cannot be any doubt.

Thus had I come away from Sandip the other day Then as I looked about me, where was it,—the tree of plenty? Oh, why does this outer world nsult the heart so?

-

And yet get it I must; how, I do not care, for sin ther cannot be. Sin taints only the weak, I with n Statt am beyond its reach Only a commoner cales thief, the king conquers and takes his right. listed ... I must find out where the treasury

i, sho takes the money in, who guarde it ligathalf the night standing in the outer veran-Expening at the row of office buildings But how on that Rs. 50,000 out of the clutches of those mbar? If by some mantram I could have made Abseguards fall dead in their places, I would te britated, -so pitiless did I fee! he shile a whole gang of robbers we a war-dance within the whitling hear

and the great house of the Rapar slept in pe, Etelofihe watch sounded hour after hour, a structured placidly looked on the lant for Amulya.

You is wanted for the Caure,' I told his and act get it out of the treasury

has see it out or the transfer out. and the said 'Why not' to Sandip fur

The poor lad's confidence could faring my man a zaked

Self-ule began to most a world livered, the marge the base of a beautifully

god 8.1 mis security of 2012 to 16, 1611 s.

CH.

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'Where is the money to come from?'

' I can loot the bazar,' he burst out, without blenching.

Leave all that alone. I have my ornaments,

they will serve."

'But,' said Amulya, ' it strikes me that the cashier cannot be bribed. Never mind, there is another and a simpler way '

'What is that?'

'Why need you hear it? It is quite simple.'

'Still, I should like to know'

Amulya fumbled in the pocket of his tunic and pulled out, first a small edition of the Gita, which he placed on the table, -and then a little pistol, which he showed me, but said nothing further.

Horror! It did not take him a moment to make up his mind to kill our good old cashier 11 To look at his frank, open face one would not have thought him capable of hurting a fly, but how different were the words which came from his mouth It was clear that the cashier's place in the world meant nothing real to him; it was a mere vacancy, lifeless, feelingess, with only stock phrases from the Gita,-IVho kills the body kills naught !

'Whatever do you mean, Amulya?' I exclaimed

¹ The cashier is the official who is most in touch with the ladies of a amundar's household, directly taking their requisitions for household stores and doing their shopping for them, and so he becomes more a member f the family than the others -Te.

at length. ' Don't you know that the dear old man has got a wife and children and that he is Where are we to find men who have no wives

and children?' he interrupted ' Look here, Maharani, the thing we call pity is, at bottom, only pity for ourselves. We cannot bear to wound our own tender instincts, and so we do not strike at all, -

y indeed! The height of cowardice! To hear Sandip's phrases in the mouth of this

tre boy staggered me. So delightfully, lovably imature was he, -of that age when the good may I be believed in as good, of that age when one all) lives and grows. The Mother in me awoke For myself there was no longer good or bad,ally death, beautiful alluring death. But to hear in stripling calmiy talk of murdering an in-

flensive old man as the right thing to do, made me hudderall over. The more clearly I saw that there *23 no sin in his heart, the more horrible appeared to me the sin of his words I seemed to see the sin of the parents visited on the innocent child The sight of his great big eyes shining with faith

and enthusiasm touched me to the quick He was sing, in his fascination, straight to the jaws of the Prilon, from which, once in, there was no return 10% * 25 he to be saved? Why does not my counh become, for once, a real Mother,—clasp him to by bosom and cry out: 'Oh, my child, my child, profits it that you should save me, if so it be

that I should fail to save you?"

CXI

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I know, I know, that all Power on earth waxes great under compact with Satan. But the Mother is there, alone though she be, to contemn and stand against this devil's progress. The Mother cares not for mere success, however great,-she wants to give life, to save life. My very soul, to-day, stretches out its hands in yearning to save this child.

A while ago I suggested robbery to him. Whatever I may now say against it will be put down to a woman's weakness. They only love our weakness when it drags the world in its toils?

'You need do nothing at all. Amulya, I will see to the money,' I told him finally

When he had almost reached the door. I called him back 'Amulya,' said I, 'I am your elder sister. To-day is not the Brothers' Day1 according to the calendar, but all the days in the year are really Brothers' Days My blessing be with you: may God keep you always.

These unexpected words from my hips took Amulya by surprise. He stood stock-still for a time.

¹ The daughter of the house occupies a place of specially tender affecion in a Bengali household (perhaps in Hindu households all over India) because by dictate of custom, she must be given away in marriage so arly She thus takes corresponding memories with her to her hurband's tie ite - per sen her

he elder, she offers her blessing and receives the brother's reverence, and ke verse Presents, called the offerings of reverence (or blessing), are tchanged.-Tr.

Then, coming to himself, he prestrated himself at my feet in acceptance of the relationship and did me reverence. When he rose his eyes were full of tears.... O little brother mine! I am fast going to my death,—let me take all your sin away with me. May no taint from me ever tarnish your innocence!

I said to him; ' Let your offering of reverence be that rustol!

'What do you want with it, sister?"

'I will practise death '

Right, sister. Our women, also, must know how to die, to deal death! with which Amulya handed me the pistol

The radiance of his youthful countenance seemed to tinge my life with the touch of a new dawn I put away the pistol within my clothes May this reserve-offering be the last resource in my extremity....

The door to the mother's chamber in my woman's heart once opened, I thought it would always remain open. But this pathway to the supreme good was closed when the mistress took the place of the mother and locked it again. The very next day law Sandin; and madness, naked and rampant, danced upon my heart.

What was this? Was this, then, my truer self? her! I had never before known this shameless, this cruel one within me. The snake-charmer had ome, pretending to draw this snake from

tran

THE HOME AND THE WORLD CHAPT the fold of my garment, - but it was never there, it

was his all the time. Some flemon has gained presession of me, and what I am doing to-day is the play of his activity at has nothing to do with me. This demon, in the game of a god, had come with his ruddy torch to call me that day, saving: "I am

your Country I am your Sandip I am more to you than anything else of yours Bande Mataram ! And with folded hands I had responded: 'You are my religion. You are my heaven. What ever che is mine shall be swept away before my love for you. Barde Matarars " Five thousand is it? I've thousand it shall be!

You want it to-morrow? To-morrow you shall have it! In this desperate orgy, that gift of five thousand shall be as the foam of wine, - and then for the riotous revel! The immovable world shall sway under our feet, fire shall flash from our eyes, a storm shall roar in our ears, what is or is not in front shall become equally dim. And then with tottering footsteps we shall plunge to our death,-

in a moment all fire will be extinguished, the ashes will be scattered, and nothing will remain behind.

भी जुबली नागरी मण्डा पुमकलय एवं वावनानक

स्ट्रश्मिं स्ट्राह्मः, बीकाः

For a time I was utterly at a loss to think of any way of getting that money. Then, the other day, in the light of intense excitement, suddenly the whole neture stood out clear before me.

Every year my husband makes a reverence-offering of six thousand rupers to my sister-in-law at the time of the Durga Puja Every year it is deposited in her account at the bank in Calcutta This year the offering was made as usual, but it has not year been sent to the bank, being kept meanwhile in an iron safe, in a corner of the luttle dressing-room

attached to our bedroom

Every year my husband takes the money to the bank himself. This year he has not yet had an

opportunity of going to town How could I fail to see the hand of Providence in this? The money has been held up because the country wants it,—
'who could have the power to take it away from her to the bank? And how can I have the power to Thirst to the the means."

refuse to take the money? The goddess reselling in destruction holds out her blood-cup crying: 'Give me drink. I am thirsty.' I will give her my own heart's blood with that five thousand.

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भी **जुबळी न**:गरी भण्डार

पुम्तकालय एवं वाचनालय रूस्मामानेक्ष्यप्र क्रीकाको

स्टेश्निभूष्ट्राहरू भग्नाम्बर्धाः बीकानेर

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Mother, the loser of that money will scarcely feel

the loss, but me you will interly min!

Many a time, in the old days, have I inwardly called the Senior Rani a thief, for I charged her with wheedling money out of my triuting husband. After her husband's death, she often nied to make away with things belonging to the estate for her own me. This I med in point out to my humband, but he remained silent. I would get angry and say "If you feel generous, make epifs by all means, but why allow yourself to be robbed?" Providence must have smiled, then, at these complaints of mine.

must have smiled, then, at these complains of mace, for to-night I ain on the way to rob my husband's safe of my sister-in-law's money.

My husband's custom was to let his keys remain in his pockets when he took off his clothes for the night, leaving them in the dressing-room. I picked out the key of the safe and opened it. The slight sound it made seemed to wake the whole world! A sudden chill turned my hands and feet ley cold,

and I shivered all over.

There was a drawer inside the safe. On opening this I found the money, not in currency notes, but in gold rolled up in paper I had no time to count out what I wanted There were twenty rolls.

There were twenty rolls, and the property of my safe.

all of which I took and tted up in a corner of my sari.
What a weight it was. The burden of the theft crished my heart to the dust. Perhaps notes would have made it seem less like thieving, but this was all gold ¢

After I had stolen into my room like a thief, it like my own room no longer. All the most recious rights which I had over it vanished at the ouch of my theft I began to mutter to myself, as hough telling mantrams: Bande Mataram, Bande Mataram, my Country, my golden Country, all this old is for you, for none else!

But in the night the mind is weak I came back no the bedroom where my husband was asteep, losing my eyes as I passed through, and went off o the open terrace beyond, on which I lay prone, lasping to my breast the end of the san tied over he gold. And each one of the rolls gave me a shock of pain.

The silent night stood there with forefinger upraised. I could not think of my house as separate from my country. I had robbed my house, I had robbed my country. For this sin my house had cased to be mine, my country also was estranged from me. Had I died begging for my country, then unsuccessfully, that would have been worship, acceptable to the gods. But theft is never worship, —how then can I offer this gold? Ah me! I am doomed to death myself, must I descerate my country with my limpious touch?

The way to put the money back is closed to me, I have not the strength to return to the room, take again that key, open once more that safe,—I should swoon on the threshold of my husband's door. The only road left now is the road in front. Neither

of trust, of righteousness?

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have I the strength deliberately to sit down and count the coins. Let them remain behind their coverings. I cannot calculate

There was no mist in the winter sky. The stars were shining brightly If, thought I to myself, as I lay out there, I had to steal these stars one by one, like golden coins, for my country,-these stars so carefully stored up in the bosom of the darkness,then the sky would be blinded, the night widowed for ever, and my theft would rob the whole world. But was not also this very thing I had done a robbing of the whole world, -not only of money, but

I spent the night lying on the terrace. When at last it was morning, and I was sure that my husband had risen and left the room, then only with my shawl pulled over my head, could I retrace my steps towards the bedroom

My sister-in-law was about, with her brass pot, watering her plants When she saw me passing in the distance she cried; ' Have you heard the news, Chota Rani?

I stopped in silence, all in a tremor It seemed to me that the rolls of sovereigns were bulging through the shawl I feared they would burst and scatter in a ringing shower, exposing to all the servants of the house the thief who had made herself destitute by robbing her own wealth.

'Your band of robbers,' she went on, 'have sent an anonymous message threatening to loot the treasury." I remained as silent as a thief.

I was advising Brother Nikhil to seek your protection, she continued banteringly. Call off your minions, Robber Queen! We will offer sacrifices to your Bande Materamif you will but save us. What doings there are these days!—but for the Lord's sake, spare our house at least from burglary.

I hastened into my room without reply. I had put my foot on quicksand, and could not now withdraw it. Struggling would only send me down deeper

If only the time would arrive when I could hand over the money to Sandip! I could bear it no longer, its weight was breaking through my very ribs.

It was still early when I got word that Sandip was awaiting me. To-day I had no thought of adornment. Wrapped as I was in my shawl, I went off to the outer apartments

As I entered the sitting-room I saw Sandip and Amulya there, together All my dignity, all my honour, seemed to run tingling through my body from head to foot and vanish into the ground. I should have to lay bare a woman's uttermost shame in sight of this boy! Could they have been discussing my deed in their meeting place? Had any vestige of a veil of decency been left for me? We women shall never understand men. When

we women shall never understand men. When they are bent on making a road for some achievement, they think nothing of breaking the h the world into pieces to pave it for the progress of their chariot. When they are mad with the intoxication of creating, they rejoice in destroying the creation of the Creator. This heart-breaking shame of mine will not attract even a glance from their eyes. They have no feeling for life itself,—all their eagerness is for their object. What am I to them but a meadow flower in the path of a torrent in flood?

CH

What good will thus extinction of me be to Sandip? Only five thousand rupees? Was not I good for something more than only five thousand rupees? Yes, indeed! Did I not learn that from Sandip himself, and was I not able in the light of this knowledge to despise all else in my world? I was the giver of light, of life, of Shakti, of immortality,—in that belief, in that joy, I had burst all my bounds and come into the open. Had any one then fulfilled for me that joy, I should have lived in my death. I should have lost nothing in the loss of my all.

my all.

Do they want to tell me now that all this was false? The psalm of my prause which was sung so devotedly, did it bring me down from my heaven, not to make heaven of earth, but only to level heaven itself with the dust?

xvi

Amulya also fixed his gaze on me. Though not my own mother's child, yet the dear lad is brother to me; for mother as mother all the world over. With his guileless face, his gentle eyes, his innocent youth, he looked at me And I, a woman,—of his mother's sex—how could I hand him poison, just because he asked for it?

'The money, Queen 'Sandip's insolent demand rang in my cars For very shame and versation I felt I wanted to fing that gold at Sandip's head, I could hardly undo the knot of my san, my fingers trembled so At last the paper rolls dropped on the table

Sandip's face grew black . He must have

parley with him, to offer to compound his claim for five thousand rupees with a few hundreds There was a moment when I thought he would snatch up the rolls and throw them out of the window, declaring that he was no beggar, but a king claiming tribute

'Is that all?' asked Amulya with such pity well. ing up in his voice that I wanted to sob out aloud. I kept my heart ughtly pressed down, and measured my head.

Sandip was speechless. He ne' rolls, nor uttered a sound.

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XVI

^{&#}x27;The money, Queen?' said Sandip with his keen glance full on my face.

gave me back twice as much in return for the blow I had dealt him, -the wound on his head ended by making me bleed at heart. When I had received Sandip's obeisance my theft seemed to gain a dignity, and the gold glittering on the table to smile away all fear of disgrace, all stings of conscience.

Like me Amulya also was won back His devotion to Sandip, which had suffered a momentary check, blazed up anew. The flower-vase of his mind filled once more with offerings for the worship of Sandip and me His sumple faith shone out of his eyes with the pure light of the morning star at dawn. After I had offered worship and received worship

my sin became radiant And as Amulya looked on my face he raised his folded bands in salutation and cried Bande Mataram ! I cannot expect to have this adoration surrounding me for ever; and yet this has come to be the only means of keeping alive my selfrespect.

I can no longer enter my bedroom. The bedstead seems to thrust out a forbidding hand the iron safe frowns at me I want to get away from this continual insult to myself which is rankling within me. I want to keep running to Sandip to hear him sing my praises. There is just this one little altar of worship which has kept its head above the all-pervading depths of my duhonour, and so I want to cleave to it night and day; for on whichever side I step away from it, there is only emptiness.

would not have touched it. But you have gi that which is more to you than life itself!'
There must be two different persons inside m

One of these in me can understand that Sandij trying to delude me; the other is content to deluded. Sandip has power, but no strength righteousness. The weapon of his which rouses life smites it again to death He has the unfailquiver of the gods, but the shafts in them are of

demons,
Sandip's handkerchief was not large enough
hold all the coins. 'Queen,' he asked, 'can y

hold all the coins

When I gave him mine, he reverently touched learned with it, and then suddenly kneeling or the floor he made me an obeisance. 'Goddest' said, 'it was to offer my reverence that I had a proached you, but you repulsed me, and rolled mit the dust. Be it so, I accept your repulse as yo boon to me, I raise it to my head in salitation with which he pointed to the place where he been hurt.

Had I then misunderstood him? Could it it that his outstretched hands had really been directed.

towards my feet? Yet, surely, even Amulya ha seen the passion that flamed out of his eys, h face. But Sandip is such an adept in setting musi to his chant of praise that I cannot argue; I los my power of seeing truth; my sight is clouded owe like an opium-cater's eyes. And so, after all, h gave me back twice as much in return for the blow I had dealt him,—the wound on his head ended by making me bleed at heart. When I had received Sandip's obeisance my theft seemed to gain a dignity, and the gold glutering on the table to smile away all fear of disgrace, all stings of conscience.

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I step away from it, there is only em.

Praise, praise, I want unceasing praise. I cannot live if my wine-cup be left empty for a single moment. So, as the very price of my life, I want Sandin of all the world, to-day.

CH.

When my husband nowadays comes in for his meals I feel I cannot sit before him; and yet it is such a shame not to be near him that I feel I cannot do that either so I sear myself where we cannot look at each other's face That was how I was sitting the other day when the Bara Rani came and joined us.

It is all very well for you, brother, said she, 'to laugh away these threatening letters. But they do frighten me so. Have you sent off that money you gave me to the Calcutta bank?'

'No, I have not yet had the time to get it away,'
my husband replied.

You are so careless, brother dear, you had better

'But it is in the iron safe right inside the inner dressing-room,' said my husband with a reassuring

'What if they get in there? You can never tell!'
'If they go so far, they might as well carry you off too!'

'Don't you fear, no one will come for poor me. The real attraction is in your room! But joking apart, don't run the risk of keeping money in the room like that.'

'They will be taking almig the Government revenue to Calcutta in a few days now. I will send this money to the bank under the same escort."

'Very well But see von don't forget all about it, you are so absent-minded '

Even if that money gets lost, while in my room,

the loss cannot be yours. Sister Rami

'Now, now, brother you will make me very angry if you talk in that way Was I making any difference between yours and mone? What if your money is lost, does not that hart me? If Providence has thought by to take away my all, it has not left me insensible to the value of the most devoted brother known since the days of Lakshman 1 Well, Junior Rain or you turned into a wood-

en doll? You have met speken a word yet. Do you know, brother our lunest Ram thinks I try to flatter you If things came to that pass I should not hesitate to do so but I know my dear old brother does not need it Thus the Senior Rais chancied ou, not forcet-

ting now and then to draw her brother's attention to this or that special delicacy amongst the dishes that were being served. My head was all the time in a whirl. The error was tast corning Something must be done about replaining that more And as I kept asking myself what could be donand how it was to be done, the uncrawing patter of

Of the Reservoir. The et en of the devotion to he wide he is Rame and his femilier's wife him his factories a browner

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CII. defeat for me. I can stand everything, but not

defeat. My share must always be the lion's share. This has been my constant quarrel with Providence I will defeat the Dispenser of my fate, but not take defeat at his hands. With a crushing

look at Amulya, Sandip walked out of the room-'Amulya, my own little brother, you must do one thing for me, I said

'I will stake my life for whatever duty you may lay on me. sister." I brought out my jewel-box from the folds of my

shawl and placed it before him 'Sell or pawn these,' I said, 'and get me six thousand rupees as fast as ever you can.

'No, no, Sister Rani,' said Amulya, touched to the quick 'Let these jewels be. I will get you six thousand all the same." 'Oh, don't be silly,' I said impatiently, 'There

is no time for any nonsense Take this box. Get away to Calcutta by the night train. And bring me the money by the day after to-morrow positively. . . Calen box. he zet

the proper price for these diamonds, so I am giving you jewels worth about thirty thousand. I don't care if they all go, but I must have that six thousand without fail.

'Do you know, Sister Rani,' said Amulya, 'I have had a quarrel with Sandip Babu over that Rs 6,000 he took from you? I cannot tell you how ashamed I felt. But Sandup Babu would have it that we must give up even our shame for the country. That may be so But this is somehow different I do not fear to die for the country, to kill for the country,—that much Shakti has been given me But I cannot forget the shame of having taken money from you There Sandup Babu is ahead of me. He has no regrets or compunctions He says we must get rid of the idea that the money belongs to the one in whose box it happens to be,—if we cannot, where is the magic of Bande Materam? Amulya gathered enthusiasm as he talked on.

He always warms up when he has me for a listener.

'The Gita tells us,' he continued, 'that no one can kill the soul Killing is a mere word So also is the taking away of money. Whose is the money? No one has created it. No one can take it away with him when he departs this life, for it is no part of his soul. To-day it is mine, to-morrow my son'a, the next day his creditor's. Since, in fact, money belongs to no one, why should any blame attach to our patriots if, instead of leaving it for some worthless son, they take it for their own use?

When I hear Sandip's words uttered by this boy, I tremble all over. Let those who are snake-charmers play with snakes; if harm comes to them, they are prepared for it. But these boys are so in. nocent, all the world is ready with its blessing to protect them. They play with a

200

ing its nature, and when we see them smilingly, troutfully, putting their hands within reach of its langs, then we understand how terribly dangerous the snake is. Sandip is right when he suspects that though I, for myself, may be ready to die at his

hands, this box I shall wean from him and save. 'So the money is wanted for the use of your

patriots?' I questioned with a simile 'Of course it is said Annilya proudly. 'Are they not our kings? Poverty takes away from their regal power. Do you know, we always insist on Sandio Babu travelling First Class? He never

stucks kingly honours, -he accepts them not for himself, but far the glory of us all. The greatest weapon of those who rule the world, Sandip Babu has told us, in the hypnotism of their display. To take the you of poverty would be for them not merely a penance,-it would mean suicide.' At this point Sandip noiselessly entered the room.

I threw my shawl over the jewel-case with a rapid movement. ' The special-talk business not yet over?' he asked

with a sneer in his tone 'Yes, we've quite finished,' said Amulya apolo-

geneally. 'It was nothing much' 'No, Amulya,' I said, 'we have not quite finish-

ed 'So exit Sandip, for the second time, I suppose?"

said Sandip. ' If you please.'

'No

'And as to Sandip's re-entry

'Not to-day I have no time'

'I see!' said Sandsp as his eyes flashed

time to waste, only for special talks?

Jealousy! Where the strong man shows weakness, there the weaker sex cannot help beating her drums of victory So I repeated firmly 'I really have no time '

Sandip went away looking black Amulya was greatly perturbed 'Sister Rani,' he pleaded, 'San-

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'He has neither cause not right to be annoyed.' I said with some vehemence Let me caution you about one thing, Amulya Say nothing to Sandip

Babu about the sale of my pwels, -on your life. 'No, I will not'

'Then you had better not delay any more. You must get away by to-night's train '

Amulya and I left the room together As we came out on the verandah Sandip was standing there. I could see he was waiting to waylay Amulya. To prevent that I had to engage him. 'What is it you wanted to tell me, Sandip Babu?' I asked.

'I have nothing special to say-mere small talk, And since you have not the time

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Sandor could are control for guest any India

You if not seen will east the marrow over me?" blanden Bardallancele brillathe would the a happy death of I described to trans-

him in Jers for I will never, to long as I live, all

you to later for to your fort' Oh, the neak the neak. It ian Sandip b

realised that he is weak before me! That is why the is this sudden outbarri of anger. He has unde street that he cannot meet the power that I wiel

with mere strength. With a glance I can crumb his strongest forpheations. So he must needl rese to bhaster. I simply smiled in contemptious silence At last have I come to a level above him. I mir never lose this santage ground; tiever descend lose

again. Amidst all inv degradation this bit of dis nity must remain to me!

"I know," said Sandip, after a paine, "it was you

irnel-case

'You may guess as you please,' said I, 'but you will get nothing out of me

' So you trust Amulya more than you trust me Do you know that the boy is the shadow of my shadow, the echo of my echo,—that he is nothing

if I am not at his side?"

**

'Where he is not your echo, he is honself, Amulya And that is where I trust him more than I can trust your echo?

'You must not forget that you are under a promise to render up all your ornaments to me for the worship of the Divine Mother In fact your offering has already been made '

'Whatever ornaments the gods leave to me will

be offered up to the cody. But how can I offer those which have been stolen as as from me?

Look here, it is no use your trying to give me the slip in that fashion Now is the time for grim work. Let that work be inished, then you can make a display of your woman's wiles to your heart's

content,-and I will help you in your game ' The moment I had stolen my husband's money

and paid it to Sandin, the mine that was in our relations stopped. Not only did I destroy all my own value by making myself cheap, but Sanden's powers, too, lost scope for their full play You cannot employ your marksmanship against a thing which is right in your grasp. So Sandip has lost his aspect of the hero, a tone of low quarrehomeness has come into his words

Sandip kept his brilliant ever fixed full on my face till they seemed to blace with all the thing of the mid-day sky. Once or twice he fidgeted with his feet, as though to leave his seat, as if to spring ticht on me. My whole lands seemed to swim, my tems the liked, the lot blood surped up to my care;



Salt Inspector, he would have been a poet. I remember his rendering to this day .

'No, Queen Bee, it is no use rummaging those bookshelves. Nikhil has ceased to read poetry since his marriage, - perhaps he has no further need for it. But I suppose 'the fever fit of poesy,' as the Sanskrit has it, is about to attack me again."

'I have come to give you a warning, Sandip,'

said my husband

rx

About the fever fit of poess "

My husband took no notice of this attempt at humour. 'For some time,' he conunued, 'Mahomedan preachers have been about stirring up the local Mussulmans. They are all wild with you, and may attack you any moment ' 'Are you come to advise flight?'

'I have come to give you information, not to offer

advice.

'Had these estates been mine, such a warning would have been necessary for the preachers, not for me. If, instead of trying to frighten me. you give them a taste of your intimidation, that would be worthier both of you and me. Do you know that your weakness is weakening your neighbouring samindare alea?"

'I did not offer you my advice, Sandip. I wish you, too, would refrain from giving me yours. Besides, it is uscless And there is another thing I want to tell you. You and your followers have been secretly worrying and oppre-

CHAPTER X

NIKHIL'S STORY

XII

I LEARNT from my master that Sandip had joined forces with Harish Kundu, and there was to be a grand celebration of the worship of the demondestroving Goddess. Harish Kundu was extorting the expenses from his tenantry. Pandits Kavratna and Vidyavagish had been commissioned to compose a hymn with a double meaning

My master has just had a passage at arms with Sandip over this. Evolution is at work amongst the gods as well, says Sandip. The grandson has to remodel the gods created by the grandfather to suit his own taste, or else he is left an atheist. It is my mission to modernise the ancient delites. I am born the savour of the gods, to emancipate them from the thraldom of the past.

from the thraidom of the past.

I have seen from our boyhood what a juggler with ideas is Sandip He has no interest in discovering truth, but to make a quizzical display of it rejouces his heart. Had he been born in the wilds of Africa he would have spent a glorious time inventing argument after argument to prove that cannibalism is the best means of promoting true communion between man and man. But those who

deal in delusion end by deluding themselves, and I fully believe that, each time Sandip creates a new fallacy, he persuades himself that he has found the truth, however contradictory his creations may be to one another.

However, I shall not give a helping hand to establish a liquor distillers in my country. The young men, who are ready to offer their services for their country's cause, must not fall mto this habit of getting intoxicated. The people who want to exact work by drugging methods set more value on the excitement than on the minds they intoxicate

I had to tell Sandip, in Bimala's presence, that he must go. Perhaps both will impute to me the wrong motive. But I must free myself also from all fear of being misunderstood. Let even Bimala misunderstand me

A number of Mahomedan preachers are being sent over from Dacca. The Mussulmans in my territory had come to have almost as much of an aversion to the killing of cows as the Hindus. But now cases of cow-killing are cropping up here and there. I had the news first from some of my Mussulman.

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are in contemplation. The trouble was that they had come to ask me to take shares in a Cotton Mill they wanted to start I had to tell them that I did not so much mind the loss of my own money, but I would not be a party to causing a loss to so many poor shareholders

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'Are we to understand, Maharaja,' said my visitors, 'that the prosperity of the country does not interest you?'
'Industry may lead to the country's prosperity,' I explained, 'but a mere desire for its prosperity

will not make for success in industry. Even when our heads were cool, our industries did not flourish. Why should we suppose that they will do so just because we have become frantic?"

'Why not say plainly that you will not risk your money?'
'I will put in my money when I see that it is

industry which prompts you But, because you have lighted a fire, it does not follow that you have the food to cook over it?

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What is this? Our Chakua sub-treasury looted! A remittance of Rs 7,500 was due from there to headquarters. The local cashier had changed the cash at the Government Treasury into small currency notes for convenience in carrying, and had tept them ready in bundles. In the middle of the right an armed band had raided the room, and wounded Kasim, the man on guard. The curious part of it was that they had taken only Rs. 6,000 and left the rest scattered on the floor, though it would have been as easy to carry that away also. Anyhow, the rad of the dators was over, now the

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police raid would begin. Peace was out of the question.

When I went mode. I found the news had travelled before me. "What a terrible thing, brother," what a terrible thing, brother, what we will be the property of the pro

I made light of the matter to reassure her still have something left. I said with a smile shall manage to get along somehow.

'Don't joke about it brothet dear. Why are they all so angry with you? Can't you humour them? Why put everybody out?

'I cannot let the county go to rack and ruin, even if that would please everybody.'

That was a shocking thing they did at the burning-grounds. It is a hourid sharm to treat you so, The Chota Rain has got rid of all her fears by din of the Englishwoman's teaching but as for me, I had to send for the priest to ascert the omen before I could get any peace of mind. For my sake, dear, do get away to Calciutta. I tremble to think what they may do, if you stay on here?

My sister-in-law's genuine anxiety touched me deeply.

'And, brother,' she went on, 'did I not warn you, it was not well to keep so much money in all

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220 THE HOME AND THE WORLD

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But why should he have left the rest of the money lying about?

'To put us off the scent. Whatever you may say, Maharaja, he must be an old hand at the game. He mounts guard during his watch, right enough, but I feel sure he has a finger in all the dacoities

going on in the neighbourhood With this the Inspector proceeded to recount the various methods by which it was possible to be concerned in a dacoity twenty or thirty miles away, and

yet be back in time for duty 'Have you brought Kasım here?' I asked.

'No,' was the reply, 'he is in the lock-up. The

Magistrate is due for the investigation ' 'I want to see him.' I said

When I went to his cell he fell at my feet, weening. 'In God's name,' he said, 'I swear I did not do this thing '

'I do not doubt you, Kasım,' I assured him. Fear nothing. They can do nothing to you, if you are innocent.

Kasim, however, was unable to give a coherent account of the incident. He was obviously examgerating. Four or five hundred men, big guns, numberless swords, figured in his narrative. It must have been either his disturbed state of mind or a desire to account for his easy defeat. He would

Level bree, haven't hatte want bear acre to strate inglesting going to be acre, given at You are not called upon o emate out a case at Hamb Rund Lee ansterte eter !

mer He that his text grainly "free roz

113 On returning home I asked my marry to t

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in this," said be, this center and the consideration and putting the courses in its place. All the of the country will now break out, he brows and ashamed '

'Who do you think could have

Don't ask me. But on o rampant. Send the

all away, eight away from here " They will

'I have given them one more day leaving the day after to-morrow."

And another thing Take Rimala away to C She is getting too narrow a view of the c side world from here, she cannot see men and thu in their true proportions. Let her see the world

men and their work, give her a broad vision." 'That is exactly what I was thinking.' Well, don't make any delay about it. I t you, Nikhil, man's history has to be built by t united effort of all the races in the world, and the

fore this selling of conscience for political reasons, this making a fetish of one's country, won't do. know that Europe does not at heart admit this, b there she has not the right to pose as our teacht x

The whole day passed in the turmoil of investigation. I was tired out when I retired for the night. I left over sending my sister-in-law's money to the treasury till next morning

I woke up from my sleep at dead of night The room was dark I thought I heard a moaning somewhere. Somebody must have been crying. Sounds of tobbing came heave with tears like fifthing that the cry rose from the heart of my room itself. I was alone. For some days Bimala had her bed in another room adjoining mine I rose up and when I went out I found her in the balcony lying Prone upon her face on the bate floor

This is something that cannot be written in words, lie only knows it who sits in the bosom of the world and receives all its panes in His own heart. The lay is dumb, the stars are mute, the night is still, and in the midst of it all that one sleepless cry!

We give these sufferings names, bad or good, acfording to the classifications of the books, but this agon, which is welling up from a norm ing into the fathomless dark, has it any name When in that midnight, standing under the siler stars, I looked upon that figure, my mind was strucwith awe, and I said to myself . Who am I to judg her?" O life, O death, O God of the infinite exis tence. I bow my head in whence to the mystery which is in you

Once I thought I should turn back But I could not. I sat down on the ground near Bimala and placed my hand on her head. At the first touch her whole body seemed to stiffen, but the next moment the hardness gave way, and the tears burst out. I gently passed my fingers over her forehead. Suddenly her hands groping for my feet grasped them and drew them to herself, pressing them against her breast with such force that I thought her heart would break

BINIALA'S STORY

xvm

Amulya is due to return from Calcutta this morning. I told the servants to let me know as soon as he arrived, but could not keep still. At last I went outside to await him in the sitting-room

When I sent him off to sell the jewels I must have been thinking only of myself. It never even crossed my mind that so young a boy, trying to sell such valuable jewellery, would at once be suspected. So haldess are we women, we needs must place on

x

others the burden of our danger. When we go to our death we drag down those who are about us.

I had said with pride that I would save Amulya,
—as if she who was drowning could save others.
But instead of saving him, I have sent him to his
doom. My little brother, such a sister have I been
to you that Death must have smiled on that Brothers' Day when I gave you my blessing,—I, who
wander distracted with the burden of my own evildoing.

I feel to-day that man is at times attacked with evil as with the plague Some germ finds its way in from somewhere, and then in the space of one night Death stalks in Why cannot the stricken one be kept far away from the rest of the world? I, at least, have realised how terrible is the contagion,—like a flery torch which burns that it may set the world on fire.

It struck nine. I could not get rid of the idea that Amulya was in trouble, that he had fallen into the clutches of the police. There must be great excitement in the Police Office—whose are the jewels?—where die he get them? And in the end I shall have to furnish the answer, in public, before all the world.

What is that answer to be? Your day has come at last, Bara Rani, you whom I have so long depised. You, in the shape of the public, the world will have your revenge. O God, save me this time, and I will cast all my oride at my sister-in-law?

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I could bear it no longer. I went straight to the Bara Rani. She was in the verandah, spicing her betel leaves, Thako at her side The sight of Thako made me shrink back for a moment, but I overcame all hesitation, and making a low obeisance I took

£ 16.

the dust of my elder sister-in-law's feet. Bless my soul, ChotaRani, she exclaimed, what has come upon you? Why this sudden reverence?"

It is my birthday, sister, said I. 'I have often caused you pain. Give me your blessing to-day that I may never do so again. My mind is so small.' I repeated my obersance and left her hur-

riedly, but she called me back. You never before told me that this was your birthday, Choue darling! Be sure to come and

have lunch with me this afternoon. You positively must.

O God, let it really be my birthday to-day. Can I not be born over again? Cleanse me, my God, and purify me and give me one more trial!

I went again to the sitting-room to find Sandip there. A feeling of disgust seemed to poison my very blood. The face of his, which I saw in the morning light, had nothing of the magic radiance of genius.

'Will you leave the room,' I blurted out. Sandip smiled. 'Since Amulya is not here,' he

remarked, 'I should think my turn had come for a special talk," y fate was coming back upon me. How was

11

I to take away the right I myself had givewould be alone,' I repeated.

'Queen,' he said, ' the presence of another does not prevent your being alone. Do not said take me for one of the crowd. I, Sandap, am attern alone, even when surrounded by thousands,

Please come some other time. This meeting 'Waiting for Amulya?'

I turned to leave the room for sheer vexage, when Sandip drew out from the folds of his cleak when sandiff that Jewel-cartet of mine and banged it down on the marble table I was thoroughly startled 'Ha not Amulya gone, then?' I exclaimed.

Gone where "

' To Calcutta?'

' No,' chuckled Sandip.

Ali, then my blessing had come true, in spite of All, then my saved Let God's punishment fall on

the change in my countenance roused Sandip scorn So pleased, Queen! socred he. An

these jewels so vers precious? How then did yo these jewers n_1 vourself to offer them to the Goddess? Y_{O_0} fift was actually made. Would you now take

Pride thes hard and raises its fangs to the las It was clear to me I must show Sandep I did care a rap about three jewels. If they have cited west greed, I said, "you may have a

'My greed to-day embraces the wealth of a Bengal,' replied Sandip 'Is there a greater force

the earth, as is the elephant, Arrauat, the steed of Indra. So then these jewels are mine.²² As Sandip took up and replaced the casket under his cloak, Amulya rushed in There were dark

than greed? It is the steed of the great ones of

rings under his eyes, his lips were dry, his hair tumbled: the freshness of his youth seemed to have withered in a single day Pangs gripped my heart as I looked on him 'My box' he cried, as he went straight up to

Sandip without a glance at me 'Have you taken

'Your jewel-box?' mocked Sandip.

'Your jewel-box' mocked Sandij

Sandip burst out into a laugh 'Your distinctions between mine and yours are getting rather thin, Amulya,' he cried 'You will die a religious preacher yet, I see.'

Amulya sank on a chair with his face in his hands. I went up to him and placing my hand on his head asked him: 'What is your trouble, Amulya?'

He stood straight up as he replied: 'I had set my heart, Sister Rani, on returning your jewels to you with my own hand. Sandip Babu knew this, but

he forestalled me.'

'What do I care for my jewels?' I said. 'Let them go. No harm is done.'

'Go? Where?' asked the mystified boy.



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longer.' With this parting shot, Sandip flung or of the room.

VIX

'I have had no peace of mind, Amulya,' I said to him, 'ever since I sent you off to sell my jewels'

'Why, Sister Rani?' 'I was afraid lest you should get into trouble with them, lest they should suspect you for a thief. I

would rather go without that six thousand. You must now do another thing for me,-go home at

once, home to your mother Amulya produced a small bundle and said: 'But,

sister. I have got the six thousand.

'I tried hard to get gold,' he went on, without replying to my question, 'but could not So I had to bring it in notes.'

' Tell me truly, Amulya, swear by me, where did you get this money?

'That I will not tell you'

'Where from?'

Everything seemed to grow dark before my eyes. 'What terrible thing have you done, Amulya?' I

cried. 'Is it then. 'I know you will say I got this money wrongly. Very well, I admit it. But I have paid the full price

for my wrong-doing. So now the money is mine.' I no longer had any desire to learn more about it. My very blood-vessels contracted, making my whole

body shrink within itself.

'Take it away, Amulya,' I implored. 'Put it back where you got it from.'

×

'That would be hard indeed!'

'It is not hard, brother dear. It was an evil moment when you first came to me Even Sandip has not been able to harm you as I have done.'

not been able to harm you as I have done,'
Sandip's name seemed to stab him
'Sandip' he cried 'It was you alone who made
me come to know that man for what he is. Do you
know, sister, he has not spent a pice out of thos

snow, sater, ne as no specim a pie offict of the sovereigns he took from you? He shut himself inthis room, after he left you, and gloated over the gold, pouring it out in a heap on the floor. "This is not money," he exclaimed, "but the petals of the divine lotus of power, crystallised strains of music from the pipes that play in the paradise;

music from the papes that play in the paradise, wealth! I cannot find it in my heart to chang them, for they seem longing to fulfil their destiny, adoming the neck of Beauty Amulya, my bo don't you look at these with your fleshly eye, the are Laishmin's smile, the gracious radiance of Indra queen. No, no, I can't give them up to that bo of a manager I am sure, Amulya, he was tellig us lies. The police haven't traced the man wi sank that boat It's the manager who wann make something out of It we must get those letter make something out of It we must get those letter.

'I asked him how we were to do this, he told re to use force or threats I offered to do so if he con return the gold. That, he said, we could c

back from him"

THE HOME AND THE WORLD CH. later. I will not trouble you, sister, with all I did to frighten the man into giving up those letters and burn them,-it is a long story. That very night I came to Sandip and said. "We are now safe. Let me have the sovereigns to return them to-morrow

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to my sister, the Maharani." But he cried, "What infatuation is this of yours? Your precious sister's skirt bids fair to hide the whole country from you Say Bande Mataram and exorcize the evil spirit." 'You know, Sister Rani, the power of Sandip's 'Then when you gave me your jewels to sell, !

magic. The gold remained with him. And I spent the whole dark night on the bathing-steps or the lake muttering Bande Mataram. went again to Sandip I could see he was angry with me. But he tried not to show it. have them hoarded up in any box of mine you may take them," said he, as he flung me his keys. They were nowhere to be seen. "Tell me where they are," I said "I will do so," he replied, "when I find your infatuation has left you Not now." employ other methods. Then I tried to get the sovereigns from him m exchange for my currency notes for Rs 6.000. "You shall have them," he said, and disappeared into his bedroom, leaving me waiting outside There he broke open my trunk and came straight to you with your casket through some other passage. He would not let me bring it, and now he dares call it his gift. How can I tell

'When I found I could not move him, I had to

how much he has deprived me of? I shall never forgive him.

But, oh sister, his power over me has been utterly

broken. And it is you who have broken it!'

'Brother dear,' said I, 'if that is so, then my life is justified. But more remains to be done, Amulya It is not enough that the spell has been destroyed. Its stains must be washed away Don't delay any longer, go at once and put back the money where you took it from. Can you not do it, dear?"

With your blessing everything is possible, Sister

Rani.

Remember, it will not be your expiation alone. but mine also I am a woman, the outside world is closed to me, else I would have gone myself My hardest punishment is that I must put on you the burden of my sin.'

'Don't say that, sister The path I was treading

was not your path. It attracted me because of its dangers and difficulties Now that your path calls me, let it be a thousand times more difficult and dangerous, the dust of your feet will help me to win through. Is it then your command that this money be replaced?"

'Not my command, brother mind, but a command from above.

'Of that I know nothing. It is enough for me that this command from above comes from your lips. And, sister, I thought I had an invitation here. I must not lose that. You must give me wait period before Ego. Them if Evan pool to manaze it, Ewil Cook ris did in the exempt? Team value to the egos when Eviled to imite as Evild 180 be it?

THE REAL AND THE PROPERTY.

CHAPTER XI

BIMALA'S STORY

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With Amulya's departure my heart sank within me On what perilous adventure had I sent this only son of his mother? O God, why need my explation have such pomp and circumstance? Could I not be allowed to suffer alone without invating all this multitude to share my punishment? Oh, let not this innocent child fall victim to Your wrath.

I called him back,-- 'Amulya"

My voice sounded so feebly, it failed to reach him. I went up to the door and called again: 'Amulya!'

He had gone.

- Who is there?
- 'Rani Mother!'
- 'Go and tell Amulya Babu that I want him'

What exactly happened I could not make out, the man, perhaps, was not familiar with Amulya's name,—but he returned almost at once followed by Sandip.

'The very moment you sent me away,' he said as he came m, 'I had a presentment that you would call me back. The attraction of the same moon causes both ebb and flow. I was so sure of being saved, saved. Be rude to me, insult me, for the shows you in your truth; but spare me your songs praise, which were false.

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My husband came in at this juncture. Sand had not the elasticity to recover himself in a ment, as he used to do before. My husband looke at him for a while in surprise. Had this happene some days ago I should have felt ashamed. But to

some days ago I should have felt ashamed. But to day I was pleased,—whatever my husband migh think. I wanted to have it out to the finish witmy weakening adversary Finding us both silent and constrained, my husband hesitated a little, and then took a chair 'Sandio.' he said. 'I have been looking for you, and

was told you were here.'
'I am here,' said Sandip with some emphasis
'Queen Bee sent for me early this morning. And
I, the humble worker of the hive, left all else to at-

tend her summons.'

'I am going to Calcutta to-morrow. You will come with me'

'And why, pray? Do you take me for one of

'And why, pray? Do you take me for one of your retinue?'
'Oh, very well, take it that you are going to Cal-

cutta, and that I am your follower.'

'I have no business there.'
'All the more reason for going. You have too

much business here.

'I don't propose to stir.'
'Then I propose to shift you.'



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- 'Forcibly?'
- 'Forcibly.'

'Very well, then, I will make a move But the vorld is not divided between Calcutta and your states. There are other places on the map'

'From the way you have been going on, one would hardly have thought that there was any other slace in the world except my estates'

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Quotation from the National Song, Bande Materem.

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Quotation from the National Song,—Baude Molaram

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'Yes,' he continued 'The mother's day is past. O love, my love, you have made as naught for me the truth and right and heaven itself. All duties have become as shadows. all rules and restraints have snapped their bonds. O love, my love, I could set fire to all the world outside this land on which you have set your dainty feet, and dance in mad revel over the ashes. These are mild mea.

These are good men They would do good to all,—as if this all were a reality! No, no! There is no

CH.

reality in the world save this one real love of mine I do you reverence. My devotion to you has made me cruel; my worship of you has lighted the raging flame of destruction within me I am not righteous. I have no beliefs, I only believe in her whom, above all else in the world, I have been able to realise. Wonderful! It was wonderful, indeed Only a munite ago I had despised this man with all my heart. But what I had thought to be dead ashes now glowed with living fire. The fire in him is true, that is beyond doubt O why has God made man such a mixed creature? Was it only to show His supernatural sleight of hand? Only a few minutes ago I had thought that Sandup, whom I had once

melodrama But that is not so, not so. Even behind the trappings of the theatre, a true hero may sometimes be lurking

There is much in Saudip that is coarse, that is

taken to be a hero, was only the stage hero of

sensuous, that is false, much that is overlaid with layer after layer of fleshly covering. Yet,-yet it is best to confess that there is a great deal in the depths of him which we do not, cannot understand,--much in ourselves too A wonderful thing is man. What great mysterious purpose he is working out only the Terrible One1 knows,-meanwhile we groan under the brunt of it. Shiva is the Lord of Chaos He is all Joy. He will destroy our bonds

I cannot but feel, again and again, that there are two persons in me. One recoils from Sandip in his terrible aspect of Chaos,-the other feels that very vision to be sweetly alluring The sinking ship drags down all who are swimming round it Sandip is just such a force of destruction. His immense attraction gets hold of one before fear can come to the rescue, and then, in the twinkling of an eye, one is drawn away, irresistably, from all light, all good, all freedom of the sky, all air that can be breathed,from lifelong accumulations, from everyday caresright to the hottom of dissolution.

From some realm of calamity has Sandip come as its messenger: and as he stalks the land, muttering unholy incantations, to him flock all the hoys and youths. The mother, seated in the lotus heart of the Country, is wailing her heart out; for they have broken open her store-room, there to hold their drunken revelry. Her vintage of the draught for the immortals they would pour out on the dust; her

Rudra, the Terrible, a name of Shiva -7r

THE HOME AND THE WORLD CH. time-honoured vessels they would smash to pieces. True, I feel with her; but, at the same time, I can-

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not help being infected with their excitement. Truth itself has sent us this temptation to test our

trustiness in upholding its commandments Intoxication masquerades in heavenly garb, and dances before the pilgrims saying. ' Fools you are that pursue the fruitless path of renunciation. Its way is long, its time passing slow So the Wielder of the

Thunderbolt has sent me to you. Behold, I the beautiful, the passionate, I will accept you, -in my embrace you shall find fulfilment.' After a pause Sandip addressed me again. ' Goddess, the time has come for me to leave you. It is well. The work of your nearness has been done. By lingering longer it would only become undone again, little by little All is lost, if in our greed we try to cheapen that which is the greatest thing on earth. That which is eternal within the moment only becomes shallow if spread out in time. We were about to spoil our infinite moment, when it was your uplifted thunderbolt which came to the

rescue. You intervened to save the purity of your vour woress, I. also. set you free to-day My earthen temple could hold you no longer, every moment it was on the point of breaking apart. To-day I depart to worship your larger image in a larger temple. I can gain

you more truly only at a distance from yourself. Here I had only your favour, there I shall be vouchsafed your boon'

My jewel-casket was lying on the table I held it up aloft as I said. I charge you to convey these my jewels to the object of my worshup,—to whom I have dedicated them through you?

My husband remained silent Sandip left the

XXI I had just sat down to make some cakes for

Amulya when the Bara Rani came upon the seene.

'Oh dear,' she exclaimed, 'has it come to this that you must make cakes for your own birthday?'

'Is there no one else for whom I could be making

Is there no one else for whom I could be making them? I asked.

But this is not the day when you should think of feasting others. It is for us to feast you I was just thinking of making something up, when I heard the staggering news which completely upset me. A

tell him that he need only hand over those notes to my husband and leave the explanations to me.

You are a wonderful creature!' my sister-in-law

'You are a wonderful creature!' my sister-in-law

'Any dantes to be offered creenocaally thought be made by the lade
of the bours hereoff -Tr



before to-morrow our history might not take such a tum as to make it all one whether we went or staved. After that, what our home, our life would be like, was utterly beyond my ken,-it seemed so misty and phantom-like

In a very few hours now my unseen fate would become visible Was there no one who could keep on postponing the flight of these hours, from day to day, and so make them long enough for me to set things right, so far as lay in my power? The time during which the seed lies underground is long-so long indeed that one forgets that there is any danger of its sprouting. But once its shoot shows up above the surface, it grows and grows so fast, there is no time to cover it up, neither with skirt, nor body, nor even life itself

I will try to think of it no more, but sit quiet,passive and callous,-let the crash come when it may. By the day after to-morrow all will be over, -publicity, laughter, bewaiting, questions, explanations, -everything

But I cannot forget the face of Amulya, -beautiful, radiant with devotion. He did not wait, despairing, for the blow of fate to fall, but rushed into the thick of danger In my misery I do him reverence. He is my boy-god Under the pretext of his playfulness he took from me the weight of my burden. He would save me by taking the punishment meant for me on his own head. But how am I to bear this terrible mercy of my God?

c out, at the change in my countenance. 'Have then really no such thing as fear?' cannot believe it, 'I said 'Why should they

of believe it, indeed! Who could have bevalue they would attack our treasurs, either?' tade no reply, but bent over my cakes, putting cocoanut stuffing ell, I'm off,' said the Bara Rani after a prod stare at me. 'I must see Brother Nikhil and

our house 24

mething done about sending off my money to tita, before it's too late: was no sooner gone than I left the cakes to are of themselves and rushed to my dressing shutting myself inside. My husband's tunic he kevs in its pocket was still hanging there,—setful was he I took the key of the iron safe; ring and kept it by me, hidden in the folds dress.

In there came a knocking at the door 'I am ig,'I called out I could hear the Bara Rain;'O niy a munter ago I saw her making cakes ow she is busy dressing up. What next, I

ig, I earlied out I could near the Bara Assign cakes ow she is busy dressing up What next, I I One of their Bande Materam meetings is suppose I say, Robber Queen, 'she called me, 'are you taking stock of your loot?' on they went awa, I hardly know what made in the safe. Perhaps there was a lurking hope might all be a dream. What if, on pulling inside drawer, I should find the rolls of gold

there, just as before?. .. Alas, everything was as empty as the trust which had been betrayed

I had to go through the farce of dressing. I had to do my hair up all over again, quite unnecessarily. When I came out my sister-in-law railed at me: 'How many times are you going to dress to-day?"

'My birthday!' I said

'Oh, any pretext seems good enough,' she went on. 'Many vain people have I seen in my day, but you beat them all hollow.'

I was about to summon a servant to send after Amulya, when one of the men came up with a little note, which he handed to me. It was from Amulya. 'Sister,' he wrote, 'you invited me this afternoon, but I thought I should not wait Let me first exeeute your bidding and then come for my prasad. I may be a little late.'

To whom could he be going to return that money? Into what fresh entanglement was the poor boy rushing? O miserable woman, you can only send him off like an arrow, but not recall him if you miss your aim

I should have declared at once that I was at the bottom of this robbery. But women live on the trust of their surroundings, this is their whole world. If once it is out that this trust has been secretly betrayed, their place in their world is lost. They have then to stand upon the fragments of the thing they have broken, and its jagged edges keep on wounding them at every turn. To sin is easy igh, but to make up for it is above all difficult

woman
or some time past all easy approaches for comion with my husband have been closed to r
then could I burst on him with this stupe

on with my nusoand have been closed to r
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news? He was very late in coming for
to-day,—nearly two o'clock He was abse
led and hardly touched any food. I had h
the right to press him to take a little more.

led and hardly touched any food. I had it the right to press him to take a little more, to avert my face to wipe away my tears, vanted so badly to say to him: 'Do come in oom and rest awhile; you look so tired.' I he cleared my throat with a little cough, when in thurried in to say that the Police Inspects

brought Panchu up to the palace. My hu

, with the shadow on his face deepened, left h unfinished and went out. ittle later the Bara Rani appeared. 'Why distort send me word when Brother Nikhil cam he complained 'As he was late I thought tas well finish my bath in the meantime. How lid he manage to get through his meal so soon? Thy, did you want thin for anything?' That is this about both of you going off to Calto-morrow? All I can say is, I am not going left here alone. I should get startled out of eat every sound, with all these dacoits about. The still a still the still a still the still a still the seated about your going to-morrow?'

uite settled about your going to-morrow?'
es,' said I, though I had only just now heard
d though, moreover, I was not at all sure that



enough, but to make up for it is above all difficult for a woman For some time past all easy approaches for communion with my husband have been closed to me. How then could I burst on him with this stupen-

CH.

dous news? He was very late in coming for his meal to-day,-nearly two o'clock. He was absentminded and hardly touched any food. I had lost even the right to press him to take a little more. I had to avert my face to wipe away my tears

I wanted so badly to say to him. ' Do come into our room and rest awhile; you look so tired.' I had just cleared my throat with a little eough, when a servant hurried in to say that the Police Inspector had brought Panchu up to the palace. My husband, with the shadow on his face deepened, left his

meal unfinished and went out A little later the Bara Rani appeared 'Why did you not send me word when Brother Nikhil came in 2' she complained 'As he was late I thought I might as well finish my bath in the meantime. However did he manage to get through his meal so soon?"

'Why, did you want him for anything?" What is this about both of you going off th Calcutta to-morrow? All I can say is, I am not going to be left here alone. I should get startled out of my life at every sound, with all these dacoits about.

Is it quite settled about your going to-morrow?" 'Yes,' said I, though I had only just now heard it; and though, moreover, I was not at all sure that

'n

before to-morrow our history might not take such a mm as to make it all one whether we went or stayed. After that, what our home, our life would be te, was utterly beyond my ken, it seemed so misty and phantom-like

In a very few hours now my unseen fate would brome visible. Was there no one who could keep ch postponing the flight of these hours, from day to dy, and so make them long enough for me to set tings right, so far as lay in my power? The time during which the seed lies underground is long—so hag indeed that one forgets that there is any danger of is sprouting. But once its shoot shows up above the surface, it grows and grows so fast, there is no time to cover it up, neither with skirt, nor body, nor nen life itself. I will try to think of it no more, but sit quiet,-

Publicity, laughter, bewailing, questions, explana-Das -cverything. But I cannot forget the face of Amulya, -beautiadding torget the lace He did not wait, des-Faring, for the blow of fate to fall, but rushed into thick of danger. In my misers I do him rever-He is my boy-god. Under the pretext of La Payfulness he took from me the weight of my harden. He would save me by taking the punishmeant for me on his own head. But how am ho bear this terrible mercy of my God?

furite and callous .- let the crash come when it By the day after to-morrow all will be over, Oh, my child my child, I do you reverence. If the brother mine, I do you reverence. Pure are yo beautiful are vere, I do you reverence. May yo come to my arms, in the next birth, as my ow child—that is my prayer.

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XXII

Rumour became busy on every side. The policy were commutally in and out. The servants of the house were in a creat flurry.

Khema, my maid, came up to me and said: 'Oh, Rani Mother! for goodness' sake put away my gold necklace and armlets in your iron safe.' To whom was I to explain that the Rani herself had been weaving all this network of trouble, and had got caught in it, too? I had to play the benign protector and take charge of Khema's ornaments and Thako's savings. The milk-woman, in her turn, brought along and Lept in my room a box in which were a Benares sari and some other of her valued possessions. 'I got these at your wedding,' she told me. When, to-morrow, my iron safe will be opened in the presence of these-Khema, Thako, the milkwoman and all the rest. Let me not think of it! Let me rather try to think what it will be like when this third day of Magh comes round again after a year has passed. Will all the wounds of my home life then be still as fresh as ever?...

writes that he will come later in the evenot remain alone with my thoughts, doing nothing. So I sit down again to make cakes for lam. I have finished making quite a quantity, but solf I must go on. Who will leat them? I shall distribute them amongst the servants I must do so this very night. To-night is my limit to be in whands

I went on untiringly, frying cake after cake from now and then it seemed to me that there was fome noise in the direction of my rooms, upstars Could it be that my husband had missed the key of the safe, and the Bara Rani had assembled all the tervants to help him to hunt for it? No, I must not pay heed to these sounds. Let me shut the door

I rose to do so, when Thako came panting in.

Rani Mother, oh, Rani Mother!

Oh get away!' I snapped out, cutting her short.
Don't come bothering me'

'The Bara Rani Mother wants you,' she went on.

'Her nephew has brought such a wonderful machine from Calcutta

It talks hke a man

Do come and hear it!

Little Address of the come and the come an

I did not know whether to laugh or to cry So, of all things, a gramophone needs must come on the seene at such a time, repeating at every winding the the nasal twang of its theatrical songs! What a fearsome thing results when a machine ape a man,

The shades of evening began to fall. I knew that Amulya would not delay to announce himself—yet I could not wait. I summoned a servant and said: Go and tell Amulya Babu to come straight in here.

0

The man came back after a while to say that Amulya was not in, -- he had not come back since he had gone.

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Gone! The last word struck my cars like a wail in the gathering darkness. Amulya gone! Had he then come like a streak of light from the setting sun, only to be gone for ever? All kinds of possible and impossible dangers flitted through my mind. It was I who had sent him to his death. What if he

was fearless? That only showed his own greatness of heart But after this how was I to go on hving all by mysel?

I had no memento of Amulya save that pistol,—his reverence-offering It seemed to me that this was a sim given by Providence. This result which

had contaminated my life at its very root,—my God in the form of a child liad left with me the means of wiping it away, and then vanished. Oh the loving gift—the saving grace that lay hidden within it!

I opened my box and took out the pistol, lifting

I opened my box and took out the pistol, litting it reverently to my forehead. At that moment the gongs clanged out from the temple attached to our house. I prostrated myself in salutation.

In the evening I fearted the whole household with

In the evening I feasted the whole household with my cakes. You have managed a wonderful birthday feast,—and all by yourself too!—exclaimed my sister-in-law. But you must leave something for us to do.' With this she turned on her gramophone and let loose the shrill treble of the Calcutta actresse all over the place. It seemed like a stable full of

neighing fillies.

*1

had a sudden longing to end my birthday celebration by taking the dust of my husband's feet went up to the bedroom and found him fast asleep He had had such a worrying, trying day. I raised the edge of the mosquito curtain very very gently, and laid my head near his feet My hair must have touched him, for he moved his legs in his sleep and pushed my head away

It got quite late before the feasting was over. I

I then went out and sat in the west verandah A silk-cotton tree, which had shed all its leaves, stood there in the distance, like a skeleton. Behind it the crescent moon was setting All of a sudden I had the feeling that the very stars in the sky were afraid of me,-that the whole of the night world was looking askance at me. Why? Because I was alone There is nothing so strange in creation as the man

who is alone. Even he whose near ones have all died, one by one, is not alone,-companionship comes for him from behind the screen of death. But he, whose kin are there, yet no longer near, who has dropped out of all the varied companionship of a full home, -the starry universe itself seems to bristle to look on him in his darkness.

Where I am, I am not. I am far away from those who are around me. I live and move upon a worldwide chasm of separation, unstable as the dew-drop upon the lotu

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7:7

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Why do not men change whelly when they thange? When I look into my heart, I find everything that was there, still there, -only they ar topsy-turvy. Things that were well-ordered hav

become jumbled up The gems that were strun

so my heart is breaking

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into a necklace are now rolling in the dust. And

I feel I want to die. Yet in my heart everything

still lives,-nor even in death can I see the end of i all; rather, in death there seems to be ever so much more of repining. What is to be ended must be ended in this life, -there is no other way out Oh forgive me just once, only this time, Lord! All that you gave into my hands as the wealth of my life, I have made into my burden. I can neither bear it longer, nor give it up O Lord, sound once again those flute strains which you played for me, long ago, standing at the rosy edge of my morning sky,-and let all my complexities become simple and easy. Nothing save the music of your flute can make whole that which has been broken, and pure that which has been sullied Create my home anew with your music. No other way can I see. I threw myself prone on the ground and sobbed aloud. It was for mercy that I prayed, -some little mercy from somewhere, some shelter, some sign of forgiveness, some hope that might bring about the end. 'Lord,' I vowed to myself, 'I will lie here, waiting and waiting touching neither food nor drink, so long as your blessing does not reach me.' I heard the sound of footsteps. Who says that the gods do not show themselves to mortal men? I

did not raise my face to look up, lest the sight should break the spell Come, oh come, come let your feet touch my head Come, Lord, an

your foot upon my throbbing heart, and at that ment let me die.

He came and sat near my head. Who? husband! At the first touch of his presence that I should swoon And then the pain a

heart burst its way out in an overwhelming fle tears, tearing through all my obstructing veir I strained his feet to my bosom, -of tould not their impress remain there for ever He tenderly stroked my head I receiv blessing. Now I shall be able to take up the r of public humiliation which will be mine to-m and offer it, in all sincerity, at the feet of m

But what keeps crushing my heart is the t that the festive flutes which were played at m ding, nine years ago, welcoming me to this will never sound for me again in this life. reason of rangement is share which many

many years, how many ages, acons, must pa I can find my way back to that day of ni ago? God can create new things, but has

the power to create afresh that which I

CHAPTER XII

MKHIL'S STORY

XV

To-now we are going to Caleutta. Our joys and sorrows lie heavy on us if we merely go on accumulating them alike are false. As master of the house I am in an artificial position—in reality I am a wayfarer on the path of life. That is why the true Master of the House gets hurt at every step and at last there comes the supreme hurt of death.

My union with you, my love, was only of the waysule; it was well enough so long as we followed the
same read; it will only hamper us if we try to preserve it further. We are now leaving its bonds behund. We are started on our journey beyond, and
it will be enough if we can throw each other a glance,
or feel the touch of each other's hands in passing.
After that? After that there is the larger world-

path, the endless current of universal life.

How little can you deprise me of, my love, after a term of a Whenever I set my car to it, I can hear the allie which is playing, its fountain of melody gushing forth from the flute-stops of separation. The immortal draught of the goddess is never exhausted. She sometimes breaks the bowl from which we drink it, only to stuile at seeing us so disconsolate over the

riling loss. I will not stop to pick up my broken low. I will march forward, albeit with unsatisfied leart

The Bara Rani came and asked me: 'What is' the meaning, brother, of all these books being packed up and sent off in box-loads?'

'It only means,' I replied, 'that I have not yet been able to get over my fondness for them'

'I only wish you would keep your fondness for some other things as well! Do you mean you are never coming back home?'

'I shall be coming and going, but shall not immure myself here any more.'

'Oh indeed! Then just come along to my room and see how many things I have been unable to thate off my fondness for.' With this she took me by the hand and marched me off.

In my sister-in-law's rooms I found numberless beve and bundles ready packed. She opened one of the boxes and said: 'See, brother, look at all my desmaking things. In this bottle I have catechu ponder scented with the pollen of screw-pine blosoms. These little tin boxes are all for different linds of spices. I have not forgotten my playing cards and draught-board either. If you two are over-busy. I shall manage to make other friends there, who will give me a game. Do you remember this comb? It was one of the Swedeshi combe was brought for me....'

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'But what is all this for, Sister Rani? Why ha

'What an extraordinary idea!'

'Don't you be afraid! I am not going there t

flirt with you, nor to quarrel with the Chota Ran One must die sooner or later, and it is just as we

to be on the bank of the holy Ganges before it is to late. It is too horrible to think of being cremate in your wretched burning-ground here, under tha stumpy banian tree,-that is why I have been re fusing to die, and have plagued you all this time." At last I could hear the true voice of home. The Bara Rani came into our house as its bride, when I was only six years old. We have played together, through the drowsy afternoons, in a corner of the roof-terrace I have thrown down to her green amras from the tree-top, to be made into deliciously indigestible chumies by slicing them up with mustard, salt and fragrant herbs. It was my part to gather for her all the forbidden things from the storeroom to be used in the marriage celebration of her doll; for, in the penal code of my grandmother, I alone was exempt from punishment And I used to be appointed her messenger to my brother, whenever she wanted to coax something special out of him, because he could not resist my importunity. I also remember how, when I suffered under the rigorous regime of the doctors of those days, -- who would not allow anything except warm water and sugared

Do you think I am not going with you?

you been packing up all these things?'

T IT

cardamom seeds during feverish attacks,—my sisterin-law could not bear my privation and used to bring me delicacies on the sly What a scolding she got one day when she was caught!

And then, as we grew up, our mutual joys and sorrows took on deeper tones of intimacy. How we quarrelled! Sometimes conflicts of worldly interests roused suspicions and jealousies, making breaches in our love, and when the Chota Ram came in between us, these breaches seemed as if they would never be mended, but it always turned out that the healing forces at bottom proved more powerful than the wounds on the surface

So has a true relationship grown up between us, from our childhood up till now, and its branching foliage has spread and broadened over every room and verandah and terrace of this great house. When I saw the Bara Rani make ready, with all her belongings, to depart from this house of ours, all the ties that bound us, to their wide-spreading ends, felt the shock.

The reason was clear to me, why she had made up her mind to drift away towards the unknown, cutting asunder all her lifelong bonds of daily habit, and of the house itself, which she had never left for a day since she first entered it at the age of nine. And yet it was this real reason which she could not allow to escape her lips, preferring rather to put forward any other paltry excuse.

She had only this one relationship left in all the

posed separation I never realised so keenly as when I stood amongst her scattered boxes and bundles. I could see at once that the little differences she used to have with Rimala, about money matters, did not proceed from any sordid worldliness, but because she felt that her claims in regard to this one

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relationship of her life had been overridden and its ties weakened for her by the coming in between of this other woman from goodness knows where! She had been hurt at every turn and yet had not the right to complain. And Bimala? She also had felt that the Senior Ram's claim over me was not based merely on our

social connection, but went much deeper; and she was realous of these ties between us, reaching back

To-day my heart knocked heavily against the

doors of my breast I sank down upon one of the boxes as I said: 'How I should love, Sister Rani, to go back to the days when we first met in this old house of ours." 'No, brother dear,' she replied with a sigh, 'I would not live my life again, -not as a woman!

Let what I have had to bear end with this one birth. I could not bear it over again."

to our childhood.

I said to her. 'The freedom to which we pass through sorrow is greater than the sorrow."

ХII

'That may be so for you men. Freedom is for you. But we women would keep others bound. We would rather be put into bondage ourselves. No, no, brother, you will never get free from our toils. If you needs must spread your wings, you will have to take us with you, we refuse to be left behind That is why I have gathered together all this weight of luggage. It would never do to allow men

> ' I said laughof your bur-

dens, it is because women pay us so handsomely for what they make us carry '

'You carry it,' she said, 'because it is made up of many small things. Whichever one you think of rejecting pleads that it is so light And so with much lightness we weigh you down do we start?'

'The train leaves at, half-past eleven to-night. There will be lots of time."

Look here, do be good for once and listen to just one word of mine. Take a good nap this afternoon. You know you never get any sleep in the train. You look so pulled down, you might go to pieces any moment. Come along, get through your bath first."

As we went towards my room, Khema, the maid, came up and with an ultra-modest pull at her veil told us, in deprecatingly low tones, that the Police Inspector had arrived with a prisoner and wanted to see the Maharaja.

' Is the Maharaja a thief, or a robber,' the Bara Rani flared up, ' that he should be set upon so by

the police? Go and tell the Inspector that the Maharaja is at his bath ' 'Let me just go and see what is the matter,' I pleaded. 'It may be something urgent,'

CH.

'No, no,' my sister-in-law insisted. 'Our Chota Ram was making a heap of cakes last night. I'll send some to the Inspector, to keep him quite till sou're ready.' With this she pushed me into my room and shut the door on me

I had not the power to resist such tyranny, -50 rare is it in this world. Let the Inspector while away the time eating cakes. What if business is a bit neglected? The police had been in great form these last few days arresting now this one, now that. Each day

some innocent person or other would be brought along to enliven the assembly in my office-room One more such imfortunate, I supposed, must have been brought in that day. But why should the Inspector alone be regaled with cakes? That would not do at all. I thumped sigorously on the door. 'If you are going mad, be quick and pour some

water over your head- that will keep you cool,' said 'Send down cakes for two,' I shouted 'The

my sister-in-law from the pawage.

person who has been brought in as the shief profit-

bly deserves them better. Tell the man to give him

a good big helping."

I hurried through my bath. When I came out, I found Bimal sitting on the floor outside. Could this be my Bimal of old, my proud, sensitive Bimal? What favour could she be wanting to beg, seated

like this at my door? As I stopped short, she stood up and said gently with downcast eyes. ' I would have a word with you.'

'Come inside then.' I said

But are you going out on any particular business 21

'I was, but let that be. I want to hear. .

'No, finish your business first. We will have our talk after you have had your dinner'

I went off to my sitting-room, to find the Police Inspector's plate quite empty. The person he had brought with him, however, was still busy eating. 'Hullo!' I ejaculated in surprise. 'You, Amulya?'

'It is I, sir,' said Amulya with his mouth full of cake, 'I've had quite a feast And if you don't mind, I'll take the rest with me.' With this he proceeded to tie up the remaining cakes in his handkerchief.

'What does this mean?' I asked, staring at the Inspector

The man laughed 'We are no nearer, sir,' he said, 'to solving the problem of the thief: meanwhile the mystery of the theft deepens.' He then produced something tied up in a rag, which when

Sitting on the bare floor is a sign of mourning, and so, by association of ideas, of an abject attitude of mind -Tr

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'In Amulya Babu's hands. He went last even

ing to the manager of your Chakna sub-office to tel him that the money had been found. The manager seemed to be in a greater state of trepidation a

the recovery than he had been at the robbery. He

was afraid he would be suspected of having made away with the notes and of now making up a cockand-bull story for fear of being found out. He asked Amulya to wait, on the pretext of getting him some refreshment, and came straight over to the

Police Office I rode off at once, kept Amulya with me, and have been busy with him the whole morning He refuses to tell us where he got the money from. I warned him he would be kept under restraint till he did so In that case, he informed me he would have to he. Very well, I said, he might

do so if he pleased. Then he stated that he had found the money under a bush I pointed out to him that it was not quite so easy to lie as all that. Under what bush? Where was the place? Why was he there?-All this would have to be stated as well. "Don't you worry," he said, "there is plenty of time to invent all that."

But, Inspector,' I said, ' why are you badgering

a respectable young gentleman like Amulya Babu?" 'I have no desire to harass him.' said the Inspec-

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tor. 'He is not only a gentleman, but the son of

XII

Nibaran Babu, my school-fellow Let me tell you, Maharaja, exactly what must have happened. Amulya knows the thief, but wants to shield him by drawing suspicion on himself That is just the sort

of bravado he loves to indulge in ' The Inspector turned to Amulya, 'Look here, voung man,' he continued, 'I also was eighteen once upon a time, and a student in the Rapon College I nearly got into gaol trying to rescue a hack driver from a police constable It was a near shave' Then he turned again to me and said. ' Maharaja, the real thief will

now probably escape, but I think I can tell you who

is at the bottom of it all ' 'Who is it, then?' I asked

'That manager, in collusion with the guard, Kasim. When the Inspector, having argued out his theory

to his own satisfaction, at last departed, I said to Amulya: 'If you will tell me who took the money, I promise you no one shall be hurt.'

'I did,' said he. 'But how can that be? What about the gang of armed men?

'It was I, by myself, alone!' What Amulya then told me was indeed extraordinary. The manager had just finished his sun-

per and was on the verandah rinsing out his mouth. The place was somewhat dark. Amulya had a revolver in each pocket, one loaded with blank untied disclosed a bundle of currency notes. 'This Maharaja," said the Inspector, ' is your six thousand

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again to me and said: ' Maharaja, the real thief will now probably escape, but I think I can tell you who is at the bottom of it all ' 'Who is it, then?' I asked

'That manager, in collusion with the guard, Kasim.

When the Inspector, having argued out his theory to his own satisfaction, at last departed, I said to Amulya: 'If you will tell me who took the money, I promise you no one shall be hurt '

'I did,' said he. But how can that be? What about the gang of

armed men?....

'It was 1. by myself, alone!'

What Amulya then told me was indeed extraordinary. The manager had just finished his supper and was on the verandah rinsing out his mouth. The place was somewhat dark. Amulya had a revolver in each pocket, one loaded with

cartridges, the other with ball. He had a mask over his face. He flashed a bull's-eye lantern in the ma nager's face and fired a blank shot. The ma

swooned away Some of the guards, who were o duty, came running up, but when Amulya fired ar other blank shot at them they lost no time in takin

cover. Then Kasım, who was on duty, came up whirling a quarter-staff This time Amulya aimed a bullet at his legs, and finding himself hit, Kasin collapsed on the floor Amulya then made the trembling manager, who had come to his senses open the safe and deliver up six thousand rupees. Finally, he took one of the estate horses and galloped off a few miles, there let the animal loose, and quitely walked up here, to our place

'What made you do all this, Amulya?' I asked. 'There was a grave reason, Maharaja,' he replied. ' But why, then, did you try to return the money?' Let her come, at whose command I did so. In her presence I shall make a clean breast of it.' 'And who may "she " be?' ' My sister, the Chota Rani!'

I sent for Bimala She came hesitatingly, barefoot, with a white shawl over her head. I had never seen my Bimal like this before She seemed to have wrapped herself in a morning light. Amulya prostrated himself in salutation and took

dust of her feet. Then, as he rose, he said: command has been executed, sister. The

'You have saved me, my little brother,' said imal. 'With your image in my mind, I have not uttered single he,' Amulya continued. 'My watchword Bande Mataram has been cast away at your feet for good. I have also received my reward, your praised,

as soon as I came to the palace."

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ne kept these to eat after you have helped me with your own hands."

I could see that I was not wanted here. I went out of the room I could only preach and preach.

so I mused, and get my effigy burnt for my paint, I had not yet been able to bring back a single roul I had not yet of death. They who have the power, can do so by a mere sign My words have not that neffable meaning I am not a flame, only a black meffable measures gone out. I can Eght no lamp. That is what the story of my he shoot, my row of lamps has remained unlie

266 THE HOME AND THE WORLD cartridges, the other with ball. He had a mask over

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Bimal looked at him blankly, unable to follow his last words. Amulya brought out his handkerchief, and untying it showed her the cakes put away inside. I did not cat them all, he said. I have kept these to cat after you have helped me with your own hands.

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XVI

I returned slowly towards the inner apartments. The Bara Rani's room must have been drawing me agam. It had become an absolute necessity for me, that day, to feel that this life of mine had been able to strike some real, some responsive chord in some

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other harp of life. One cannot realise one's own existence by remaining within oneself,—it has to be sought outside.

As I passed in front of my sister-in-law's room, she came out saying. I may afraid you would be late again this afternoon. However, I ordered your dinner as soon as I heard you coming. It will be

dunier as soon as I heard you coming. It will be served in a minute.

'Meanwhile,' I said, 'let me take out that money of yours and have it kept ready to take with us.'

As we walked on towards my room she asked me if the Police Inspector had made any report about the robbery. I somehow did not feel inclined to tell her all the details of how that six thousand had come hade. 'That's use what all the flux is about.'

tell her all the details of how that six thousand had come back. "That's just what all the fuss is about," I said evasively
When I went into my dressing-room and took out my bunch of keys, I did not find the key of the iron safe on the ring. What an absurdly absent-minded fellow I was, to be sure! Only this morning I had

my bunch of keys, I did not find the key of the iron safe on the ring. What an absurdly absent-minded fellow I was, to be sure! Only this morning I had been opening so many boxes and things, and never noticed that this key was not there. 'What has happened to your key?' she asked me.

What has happened to your key? she asked me. I went on fumbling m this pocket and that, but solld give her no answer I hunted in the same blace over and over again It dawned on both of is that it could not be a case of the key being misaid. Some one must have taken it off the ring. Who could it be? Who else could have come into

Who could it be? Who else could have come into his room?

'Don't you worry about it,' she said to me 'Get through your dinner first The Chota Ram must have kept it herself, seeing how absent-minded you are getting.'

I was, however, greatly disturbed. It was never hards habit to take any key of mine without telling me about it. Bimal was not present at my meal-time that day; she was busy feasting Amulya in her own room. My sister-m-law wanted to send for her.

for her, but I asked her not to do to.

I had just finished my dinner when Bimal came in. I would lave preferred not to discuss the matter of the key in the Bara Ram's presence, but as

soon as she saw Bimal, she asked her. 'Do you know, dear, where the key of the safe 15?'

'I have it,' was the reply

Didn't I say so!' exclaimed my sister-in-law triumpliantly. Our Chota Ram pretends not to care about these robberies, but she takes precautions on

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out that money in the evening,"

There you go again, putting it off, said the Bara Rani. 'Why not take it out and send it to the treasury while you have it in mind?'

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Where have you kept it, then?" asked my sister-in-law.

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'I have it,' was the reply. 'Didn't I say so!' exclaimed my sister-in-law triimphantly. Our Chota Rani pretends not to care about these robberies, but she takes precautions on

he sly, all the same." The look on Bimat's face made my mind misgive "c. 'Let the Ley be, now,' I said 'I will take

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I was startled.

Where have you kept it, then?' asked my sister-2daw

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'I have spent it' 'Just listen to her! Whatever did you spend all

that money on 3' Bimal made no reply. I asked her nothing further. The Bara Rani seemed about to make some

further remark to Bimala, but checked herself. ' Well, that is all right, anyway,' she said at length, as she looked towards me 'Just what I used to do with my husband's loose cash I knew it was no use leaving it with him, -his hundred and one hangers-on would be sure to get hold of it You are much the same, dear! What a number of ways you men know of getting through money We can only save it from you by stealing it ourselves! Come

The Bara Rani led me to my room, but I hardly knew where I was going She sat by my bed after I was stretched on it, and smiled at Bimal as she said: 'Give me one of your pans, Chotie darling,-

along now Off with you to bed.'

what? You have none! You have become a regular mem-sahib. Then send for some from my mom ' 'But have you had your dinner yet? I anxiously

enquired.

'Oh long ago,' she rephed,-clearly a fib.

She kept on chattering away there at my bedside, on all manner of things The maid came and told Bimal that her dinner had been served and was getting cold, but she gave no sign of having heard it. 'Not had your dinner yet? What nonsense!

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It's fearfully late.' With this the Bara Rani took Bimal away with her I could divine that there was some connexion between the taking out of this six thousand and the robbing of the other But I have no curiosity to

learn the nature of it I shall never ask Providence leaves our life moulded in the rough, -its object being that we ourselves should put the finishing touches, shaping it into its final form to our aste, There has always been the hankering within me o express some great idea in the process of giving hape to my life on the hnes suggested by the Creator. n this endeasour I have spent all my days. How everely I have curbed my desires, repressed myself it every step, only the Searcher of the Heart knows.

But the difficulty is, that one's life is not solely me's own He who would create it must do so with the help of his surroundings, or he will fail

My trial is hard indeed. Just when I want a

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helpmate most, I am thrown back on myself alone. Nevertheless, I record my vow that even in this trial I shall win through Alone, then, shall I tread my

thorny path to the end of this life's journey.....

I have begun to suspect that there has all along been a ven of tyranny in me. There was a des-

potism in my desire to mould my relations with Bimala in a hard, clear-cut, perfect form. But man's life was not meant to be cast in a mould. And if we try to shape the good, as so much mere material, it takes a terrible revenge by loting its life.

I did not realise all this while that it must have been this unconscious tyranuy of mine which made us gradually drift apart. Dimala's hie, not finding its true level by reason of my pressure from above, has had to find an outlet by undermining its banks at the bottom. She hav had to steal this six thousand rupees because she could not be open with me,

because the felt that, in certain things, I despotically differed from her. Men, such as 1, possessed with one idea, are indeed at one with those who can manage to agree with us; but those who do not, can only get on with us by cheating us. It is our unyielding obtinacy, which draves even the simplest to northous ways. In trying to manufacture a helpmate, we spoul a wife-

Could I not go back to the beginning? Then, indeed, I should follow the path of the simple. I should not try to fetter my life's companion with m)

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my: Do you love me? Then may you grow true to yourself in the light of your love. Let my suggestions be suppressed, let God's design, which is in you, triumph, and my ideas retire abashed." But can even Nature's nursing heal the open

wound, into which our accumulated differences have broken out? The covering veil, beneath the privacy of which Nature's silent forces alone can work, has been torn asunder. Wounds must be bandaged,-can we not bandage our wound with our love, so that the day may come when its scar will no longer be visible? Is it not too late? So much time has been lost in misunderstanding; it has talen right up to provide semana an and and ?

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:*1

Uried to draw Let to my breast, but the public my arms as as and kindle at my feet, touching them reportedly with her head, in observing. I handle dress my feet hick, but the chaped if emin her arms, taxling in a clearing wine. They not, my, my, must be take away your feet. Let me do my wordly?

Theproof Who was I complered Warlibe got of the west parties I doubt have any quality

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but my sleep did not, and it was nowhere to b found. 'No. no.' I repeated, 'this will never do. -Li

down for a while, at least

But how can you get through all this alone?"

'Of course I can' Well, you may boast of being able to do withou

me. But frankly I can't do without you. Ever sleep refused to come to me, alone, in that room. Then he set to work again

But there was an interruption, in the shape of servant, who came and said that Sandip Babu has called and had asked to be announced. I did no dare to ask whom he wanted The light of the sty seemed suddenly to be shut down, like the leaves of

a sensitive plant *Come, Bimal, said my husband. Let us go

and hear what Sandip has to tell us. Since he has come back again after taking his leave t



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and near what Sandip has to tell us. Since he come back again, after taking his leave, he is have something special to say.

I went, simply because it would have been more embarrassing to stay. Sandip was starin a picture on the wall. As we entered he said:

must be wondering why the fellow has retur fut you know the ghost is never laid till all the are complete. With these words he brought o his pecket something tied in his handkerchief,

hying it on the table, undid the linet. It was to wreteigns.
'Don't you mistale me, Nilhil,' he said. 276

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must not imagine that the contagion of your company has suddenly turned me honest; I am not the man to come back in slobbering repentance to re-

turn ill-gotten money. But.... He left his speech unfinished. After a pause

he turned towards Nikhil, but said to me: 'After all these days, Queen Bee, the ghost of compunction

has found an entry into my hitherto untroubled conscience. As I have to wrestle with it every night, after my first sleep is over, I cannot call it a phantom of my imagination. There is no escape for me till its debt is paid. Into the hands of that spirit, therefore, let me make restitution. Goddess! From you, alone, of all the world, I shall not be able to take away anything. I shall not be rid of you till

I am destitute Take these back! He took out at the same time the jewel-casket from under his tunic and put it down, and then left us with hasty steps. ' Listen to me, Sandip,' my husband called after him 'I have not the time, Nikhil,' said Sandip as he paused near the door. 'The Mussulmans, I am told, have taken me for an invaluable gem, and are conspiring to loot me and hide me away in their graveyard. But I feel that it is necessary that I should live. I have just twenty-five minutes to catch the North-bound train. So, for the present, I must be gone. We shall have our talk out at the next convenient opportunity. If you take my adwire, don't you delay in getting away eithe 11 te you, Queen Bee, Queen of the bleeding he Qra cidesolation!

Sand p then left almost at a run. I stood r.I. I had never realised in such a manner b bow trivial, how paltry, this gold and these

ort. Ord; a short while ago I was so busy

to what I should take with me, and how I a farlie. Now I felt that there was no need t anding at all. To set out and go forth w

investations. My himband left his seat and came up an er by the hand "It is getting late," he

There is not much time left to complete or Artims for the journey."

it the print Chandranath Babu suddenf in linding as both together, he fell bae Then he said, ' Forgive me, n " be, if I intrude. Nilhil, the Mussulmans Mari They are looting Harish Kunde That does not so much matter. B " no raide is the violence that is being "It was east their house," "Lame or ties "to bushand

" Wat can you do there?" I pleaded, I will the French . Oh' tit, I ablerate Barn 4 Strill how more well below mer

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with fiery-feathered wings outspread. It seemed to me that this fateful day was taking its flight, to cross the ocean of night.

It became darker and darker. Like the flames of a distant village on fire, leaping up every now and then above the horizon, a distant din swelled up in

recurring waves into the darkness.

The bells of the evening worship rang out from our temple. I know the Peer Peer have diving

our temple. I knew the Bara Rani was sitting there, with palms joined in silent prayer But I could not mote a step from the window The roads, the village beyond, and the still more

distant fringe of trees, grew more and more vague The lake in our grounds looked up into the sky with a dull lustre, like a blind man's eye. On the left the tower seemed to be craning its neck to catch sight of something that was happening

The sounds of night take on all manner of disguises. A fwig snaps, and one thinks that somebody is running for his life. A door slams, and one feels it to be the sudden heart-thump of a startled world.

Lights would suddenly flicker under the shade of the distant trees, and then go out again. Horses' hoofs would elatter, now and again, only to turn out to be riders leaving the palace gates. 'Don't be alarmed, Bimal,' said my husband, a

he left us.

When I went to the window I saw my husban galloping away on horseback, with not a weapon it

gauloping away on norseback, with not a weapon is his hands
In another minute the Bara Rani came running
in. 'What have you done. Chotic darling,' she

In another minute the Bara Rani came running in. 'What have you done, Chotic darling,' she cried. 'How could you let him go?' 'Call the Dewan at once,' she said, turning to a

The Ranis never appeared before the Dewan, but

servant

the Bara Rani had no thought that day for appearances
'Send a mounted man to bring back the Maharaja at once,' she said, as soon as the Dewan came up.
'We have all entreated him to stay, Rani mother,'

said the Dewan, 'but he refused to furn back.'
'Send word to him that the Bara Rani is ill, that she is on her death-bed,' cried my sister-in-law wildly.

When the Dewan had left she turned on me with

a furious outburst. *Oh, you witch, you ogress, you could not die yourself, but needs must send him to his death!. . *

The light of the day began to fade. The sun set behind the feathery foliage of the blossoming Sajna tree. I can see every different shade of that sunset even to-day. Two masses of cloud on either

side of the sinking orb made it look like a great bird

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I continually had the feeling that, if only I could die, all this turmoil would come to an end. So long as I was alive my sins would remain rampant, scattering destruction on every side. I remembered



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the pistol in my box. But my feet refused to leave

the window in quest of it. Was I not awaiting my

fate?

The gong of the watch solemnly struck ten. A little later, groups of lights appeared in the distance and a great crowd wound its way, like some great

serpent, along the roads in the darkness, towards the palace gates. The Dewan rushed to the gate at the sound. Just

then a rider came galloping in 'What's the news, Iata?' asked the Dewan. 'Not good,' was the reply

I could hear these words distinctly from my win-

But something was next whispered which I could not catch Then came a palanquin, followed by a litter. The doctor was walking alongside the palanquin. What do you think, doctor?' asked the Dewan.

Can't say yet,' the doctor replied ' The wound in the head is a serious one

' And Amulya Babu?' He has a bullet through the heart He is done for.

